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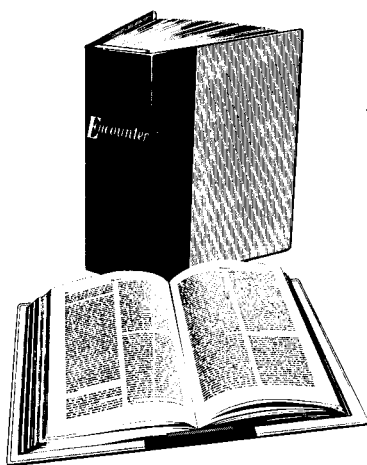
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Shena Mackay

The Stained Glass Door

JEAN MACALLISTER's rather large white face, which had hung soft and dreamy in the steam of her drinking chocolate, hardened as she turned from the kitchen window.

"She's out there again."

Nigel MacAllister yawned; scratching his chest, catching his finger in a grey curl.

"She's probably lonely. Bored. Anyway she'll be gone soon. You know how those people come and go. . . ."

"She doesn't. She's going in now, grinding out a cigarette with her foot. That lawn must be knee-deep in cigarette butts."

"If you can call it a lawn any more."

"It was such a lovely garden. You'd think the Council. . . ."

Nigel yawned again; he had heard it all before—that beautiful house, the mirror image of their own, taken over by the Council; the blanket looped across the window instead of curtains, the rusting cars, the broken glass, the language. He gave his wife a slap, almost too hard, as she hung the washed mugs on their hooks.

"Come on then, or we won't get up in the morning."

They went upstairs.

"Nigel—is anything wrong?"

"I told you, I've got problems at work."

"Actually, you didn't."

As the sound of a plane ebbed in the darkness a rumbling came from Nigel's side of the bed and Jean's stomach gave a timid answering bleat. She could have felt sorry for those two stomachs had they lain side by side in white bloody trays in a butcher's window, which was how, for a moment, she saw them.

The following evening Jean arrived home from her upholstery class with her little hammer, bristling with tacks, although nothing in that house needed re-upholstering; there

were no children or animals to kick and claw, not even any visiting nieces and nephews; she stood for a moment looking at the sky. A jewelled insect was homing in on Gatwick through the stars. The house next door was in darkness but the girl in the downstairs flat had neglected to pull down the blanket across the window and Jean saw her, in the light of a streetlamp, asleep on a divan, hair spread out, thumb in mouth.

AS ON NEARLY every morning, Jean stood at the head of the stairs, restored and reassured by her house; the morning sunshine filtering through the stained glass door, throwing pale pink and green and yellow bars and diamonds and lozenges of light on to the carpet, gilding the hall table, the flowers in the iridescent glass; the empty rooms unfolding quietly from the hall. Several brown envelopes lay on the mat; they were all that seemed to come nowadays. She hardly glanced at them as she threw them on to the sideboard. Boring bills. She left all that side of things to Nigel.

Later, although it was not yet ten o'clock, in her cotton dress and sandals, she was beaded with sweat by the time she reached the High Street. Outside the baker's she bumped into a woman and looked into her powdered face, a red slick of lipstick or jam in icing sugar, and realised that this oozing doughnut had been driven, at this early hour, to pound the hot pavements to the off-licence; tell-tale bottles clashed glassily in her bag. Jean turned with relief to the wholesome shiny sticks of bread.

Later again that morning she saw, through a fine pink mist of Windolene, the girl from next door with her baby on her hip, a plastic bag of washing on the seat of the pushchair,

setting off for the launderette. Really, there would seem nothing to connect those two, the skinny blonde girl and the unarguably coffee-coloured baby. Except that the tiny brown hand was tangled in the lank hair like a baby animal's clinging on to its mother's fur. As she rubbed the window clear it blurred unaccountably.

With a heavy hand she sliced slabs of French bread for the bread and cheese lunch she was holding, the proceeds from which were to go to Oxfam. Her friends pecked like starlings with greasy beaks; her bread hovered in the air as Nigel, then the girl next door, superimposed themselves on the chatter about children's "O"-level options. She sighed and smeared her bread with butter and pickle. "I'm starving", she remarked through a mouthful of piercing crust. "Let's take our coffee on to the patio", she suggested, but the sunny stones were splintered by pop music from a radio next door. "Will you turn that bloody thing down!" She suddenly erupted in a brown geyser of hot coffee. Her friends mopped and soothed, but all at once realised how time had flown and that so must they.

THE MACALLISTERS brought their friends, Peter and Mary, back to supper after a concert at the Fairfield Halls. Blue skeins of cigar smoke wound over the coffee cups, binding them, still softened by music and golden bellied wood, together. The doorbell burst blue ropes, shattered golden wood. Jean returned from answering it. "It was that girl from next door. Mandy. She wanted to use the telephone. I told her to use the callbox on the corner." Her voice rose. "It was for her own good. These people have got to stand on their own two feet. That's the trouble with the Welfare State; it makes people lazy. Soft. I mean, Nigel's worked damned hard for everything we've got!" She stalked into the kitchen, clashing bowls, leaving Nigel and Mary to rekindle a cigar and prod a candle with a dead match, dropping ugly black specks into the rosy wax. Peter followed with a couple of spoons.

"I wish she'd go!" Jean burst out. "I'm sick of her. Always looming. Intruding. Imposing her miserable life on mine. I mean..." above the thunderous tap, wrenching pink rubber

gloves on to her fingers, "it's not my fault. . . ."

Peter sidestepped the spray as the water hit a fork, and turned off the tap.

"Of course it's not your fault. Your trouble is, you care too much about other people."

The next morning Mary telephoned. "Have you been in the copse lately?"

"No. Why?"

"There are masses of blackberries there. Beauties. Come and have a bite of lunch after Yoga and we'll go blackberrying."

"If you like."

The receiver gave a squawk, almost a hurt sound, as she put it down on her friend's voice.

SHE HAD not intended to bulge in her leotard and black tights that morning, her head achy with too much wine the night before, and Mary's wholemeal pizza would undo any benefit the exercise might give; but the half-empty freezer groaned like a threatening ice floe for the soft fruit and she had made no jam yet. The afternoon found them in the copse armed with Tupperware containers. Jean felt the knots that Yoga had failed to untie dissolve in the sun and birdsong as she gazed at a stem that bore bud, white flower, hard green berry, solid jelly brushed with red and the rich black culmination. Mary grabbed her arm.

"What's that noise?"

A blackbird shrieked. Over their banging hearts a steady shuffling sound came nearer. The middle-aged women clutched each other among spilled berries. It came towards them. A baby broke through the undergrowth. It crawled; laughing through lips juicy with squashed blackberries. Mandy strode up and scooped the baby, who kicked its legs in delight, under her arm, and was gone, but not before they had seen her face, streaked with tears and dirt where an earthy hand had brushed them away. Although they continued to pick greedily, the gloss was gone from the afternoon. As Jean hurried past the house next door, through the smell of a blocked drain, it seemed to lunge at her; her own house in a distorting mirror.

It seemed that she had lost the art of making jam. She boiled and boiled; the house was filled with the smell of apples and blackberries, but the jam would not set.

HOT UNEASY NIGHTS when they sweated separately in bed followed hot days when Jean could do nothing but lie on the grass. The sprinkler on the lawn brought a cool damp hour on some evenings; then she did the ironing, alone in the house, through a glaze of gin. She ceased to notice the light falling through the stained glass door; the stems of the flowers on the hall table swelled and stank; the pile of unopened brown envelopes on the dusty sideboard grew higher.

She woke one night, whimpering; her silky nightdress clinging like a rag. Unhappy noises came from the hot cages next door. Someone was shouting, the baby was crying, glass smashed. "Nigel", she whispered in the darkness of her life grown rotten, "Nigel." With a groan, he fell on her; she felt a tear fall on to her neck and burn the hollow of her collar-bone.

Tomorrow she would clean the house, cook a wonderful meal, and over it he would tell her what was wrong. Together they would tackle and beat the foe, whatever it was. She nestled against the dear body that had been given into her care and moaned softly to think that he had not been able to trust himself to her.

It was afternoon by the time she was able to get on to the patio with the crossword. In the gleaming house were flowers and such beautiful still lifes of fruit and vegetables that she would be reluctant to put them to the knife. She twirled the pen in her fingers; the sun struck its transparent plastic facets, threw revolving rainbows on the newsprint. Something dropped to the grass. A pear had fallen from the tree in next door's garden. The tree was heavy with golden fruit against the blue; ripe, heavy, going to waste. A bird even had its beak in one. She looked at the house. The family upstairs was out. The drug addicts in the middle flat were either asleep or dead. Mandy's radio was silent.

She was on the wall almost before she knew it. The pears fell into her hands and spread skirt. Scented flesh broke against her teeth. Suddenly, in a cracking of branches, Mandy's face thrust through the leaves. Jean jumped, breaking twigs, grazing the backs of her thighs on the wall, and landed heavily on all fours. She looked up over her shoulder, like a dog. Mandy was standing on the wall, gigantic against the sky, hurling pears at her, shouting: "You want it all, don't you? You want the lot!

Well go on then, take it! Have the bloody pears!" Jean caught a pear as she fled inside. It lay in her hand, gilded, wormy.

By six o'clock the shameful incident, marinated all afternoon in her mind, was sufficiently tenderised and trimmed to be offered as an amusing anecdote to Nigel when he came home. But he did not come home.

Jean woke on the sofa to a smell of burning from the oven and to find that someone had drunk all the wine. She lifted the receiver to ring the police and let it fall. She knew that he had left her. Days and nights passed. Someone. There must be someone. Not her friends. There was only Mandy. Fellow sufferer. Betrayed. But golden pears blocked her path. Jean seized two withered apples from the fruit bowl, smiling in anticipation of Mandy's face as she understood the peace offering. There was a light behind the blanket, and music. Jean pressed and pressed the broken bell. "There'll be a heartache tonight, heartache tonight . . ." came through the cracked stained glass.

LATER SHE REALISED that she had been sitting for a long time in the skeleton of a chair. She had forgotten all about her upholstery class. She went to the telephone.

"Peter. How are you? It's Jean. Is Mary there?"

"Jean! Are you all right?"

"Of course I'm all right. I merely wanted to ask Mary if she had a y of that red Dralon left. Why shouldn't I be all right?"

"It's just that it's three o'clock in the morning. . . ."

Jean was woken by an unfamiliar noise from next door. Laughter. Feet were going up and down the path. She threw back the duvet and ran to the window.

Mandy was leaving in a taxi.

Jean struggled with the window and forced it open. She wanted to say something, make everything all right. She clawed through the wardrobe and pulled out a bag. "Mandy!" The car backfired a contemptuous burst of grey smoke at her. Mandy was gone.

Escaped. Victorious. Jean hurled the bag through the window. It burst, spilling spurned, never-needed baby clothes over the road.

Mary might have telephoned her but she would not have got through, because that morning the phone was cut off.

The man in the Social Security office gave Jean a funny look as she sat down in the peeling grey and yellow room. She knew she looked all right; she had checked in the "ladies" in the pub. "How was Brittany?" she asked brightly. He stared. "Don't you remember? I came in a year or so ago about my holiday insurance and we discovered that we were going to the same place." Evidently he did not remember.

THE WEATHER became colder. Jean lay shivering in the aftermath of a dream in which she and Nigel were putting up the tent on a camp-site and Nigel had started to hammer the tentpeg into her head. She realised that it was more than a year since he had gone. She could still hear the hammering. A man was fixing a "For sale" sign to the fence. She remembered the face of a woman outside the baker's, whom she had despised as a doughnut. Now it was she who lay on the edge of a bed grown too vast; a white soggy meringue left on the side of someone's plate.

Surely she had had most need of blessing? Jean came down the church aisle more unsteadily than was possible from the mouthful of wine, although she had not risen from the altar rail after receiving the Sacrament. She had stretched out her hands again for the Cup but the blue glassy eyes of the vicar had cut them and passed over her.

If afterwards, in the porch, his white sleeve billowed for a moment like the sail of a rescue ship, it was at once drowned by a wave of eager young faces. A woman's voice called her name tentatively as she stumbled over the humpbacked gravestones, grey whales and basking sharks with granite teeth, that reared under her feet. She cursed herself for putting

those two pound notes in the collection. Much good it had done her. Her heart was already thumping with the beginnings of shame. There was only one way, impossible now, to soothe it. Let soft seas of alcohol lap over the brain. She walked into the terrible yawning dry jaws of afternoon.

Something made her stop and look in her purse. She pulled out two pound notes. The miraculous green paper shook in her fingers. She must have put a pawn ticket in the collection bag. "Thank you, God", she said as she went into the off-licence.

Tired, and buffeted by Christmas shoppers, Jean was thankful to get home. How pretty the holly wreath looked, festive against the stained glass. Nigel must have done it to surprise her. She knelt to kiss its berries; the cold prickles grazed her face. Her key wouldn't fit. She rattled and rattled. Tears burst from her eyes as she put her mouth to the letterbox, smearing the polished brass. "Nigel", she called, "Nigel! I can't open the door!" He opened it in a rush of spicy air. But it wasn't Nigel. A boy stood staring at her. "Mum", he shouted, "Mu-um!" She scrambled up. The holly had scratched her lip. With the metallic taste of blood she remembered. She turned back up the slushy path and into the house next door.

She kicked off her shoes and lit the fire and sat down to see what she had bought. A Bird's Trifle. How odd. Still, there was a little milk; it wouldn't matter if it had gone off slightly. Her coat fell open and she confronted a thigh; she must have forgotten to put her skirt on. She sat in her leotard stroking in pity the poor white flesh marbled with cold. The light went out. The gas fire went out.

In the light from the streetlamp falling through the blanket looped across the window she turned to the trifle. The Dream Topping. The hundreds and thousands melting in rainbow drizzle.

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The Children

In the boundless afternoon
the children are walking
with their gentle grammar on their lips.

From door to door
the little ones go, brightly tranquil,
repenting nothing.

How safe their journey,
their placid marching,
famous and simple voyage.

Whisper to me as if I were a child
and the answer you get,
let it be your oracle and mine.

Panics may still trouble us,
the archaeology of our own past,
but we are pursuing that too-knowing adult dark
with the fires and lamps of innocence.

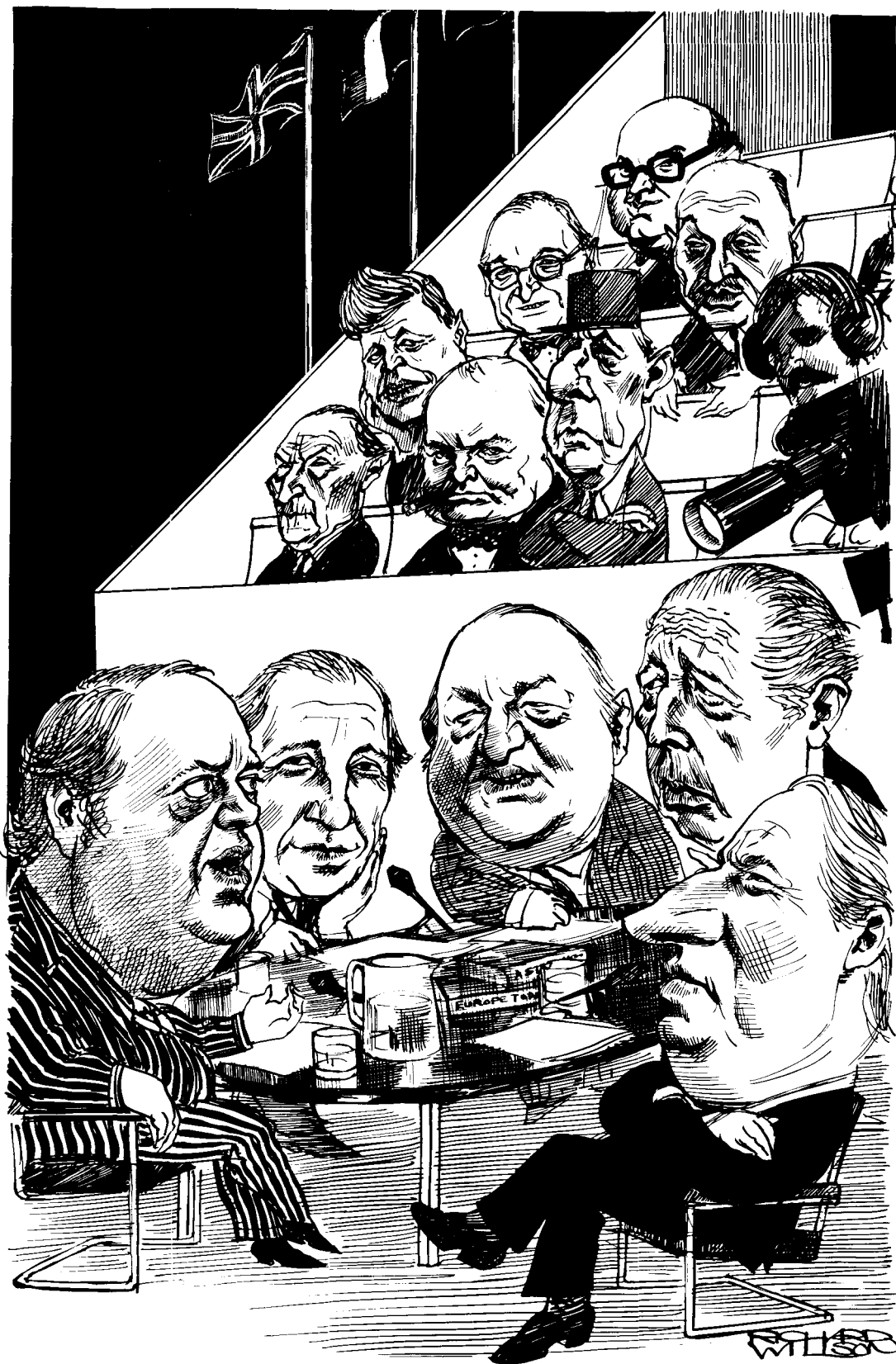
Soon our message will reach you, our gospel.
Free at last, happy at last,
we have gone away into the wise world of the children.

Penelope Shuttle

Soho Square, April

An animal wakes expansively, like love,
and thinks of a grass island in the hot city
where the play of voices would be a soft, excitable
ostinato to the traffic's dischords
—like a thicket of stirring birds at first light,
like water twisting its future
down the shoulder of a hill.
The sky touches the animal through a small window
and already its heart has sidled
into the kingdom of memory, trying to hear
the soft husks drop from the plane-trees
like tiny, peeled fur-coats.
Now the buildings are honeycombed with abandoned lairs,
each with its empty machine mirroring
the futile mid-day glamour of fluorescence,
and a swivel chair that has turned its back on words.
The animal lies uncertainly in its new element
moated by wall flowers, rinsed of cars and fear.
It bares its delicate skin to search for splinters
of time, finds nothing that the sun won't cure.

Carol Rumens



Michael Charlton

How and Why Britain Lost the Leadership of Europe

*“Messina! Messina!”
or, The Parting of the Ways*

THE LANGUAGE OF DIPLOMACY, when it talks of those moments in history which were “seized” or the opportunities “cast away”, shows a fondness for using homely analogies drawn from locomotion. Not always have they proved to be felicitous. As, for example, when Neville Chamberlain looked across the Channel in 1940 and announced, just before the German armies burst into France, that Hitler had “missed the bus”....

The critique of Britain’s European policy, in the crucial decade of the 1950s, when a new design of cooperation between the old Nation-States in the West was being fixed and settled, is persistent in these allusions to the European bus, boat, or train which Britain is said to have missed.

In 1950, when Jean Monnet had produced the Schuman Plan for the Coal & Steel Community as the nucleus of European unity, he expressed his conviction that the British were not a people to board the train standing at the station, but would join it only if they saw it begin to move. His analysis was in keeping with Britain’s tradition and reputation as an eleventh-hour nation accustomed to Balance-of-Power politics, a view which had been confirmed in him by the British rejection of his overtures for joint Anglo-French action in 1949.

In that watershed of a week-end in June 1950, when the Schuman Plan was revealed—and Britain refused to participate in the negotiations which followed—Monnet had this recorded exchange with Stafford Cripps, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

“My dear friend”, Monnet said (when Cripps asked him if France would go ahead with Germany and without Britain), “you know how I’ve felt about Britain for 30 years, there is no question about that. I hope with all my heart that you will join from the start. But if you don’t, then we will go ahead without you; and because you are realists you’ll adjust to the facts when you see that we’ve succeeded....”

Now, only four years later it was Jean Monnet, and with him the American policy which had endorsed his concepts of federation as the path to unity in Europe, who appeared to have suffered perhaps a mortal defeat. The attempt to solve the problem of rearming Germany by extending the logic of the Coal & Steel Community into the field of defence collapsed. That was “a bridge too far.”

The official British scepticism about the impractical idealism of the European Federalists appeared to be vindicated. With the fall of the European Defence Community, the initiative Britain had lost with the advent of the Coal & Steel Community now swung back towards her. And this is the context in which the belief that Britain had “missed the bus” in Europe finds its most liberal distribution. This bus was the one which was waiting at Messina in June 1955.

IN THIS IMPROBABLE LOCATION in Sicily, the Foreign Ministers of the Six who had failed with the Defence Community’s integrated European Army met and issued an invitation to Britain to take part on any terms and conditions she wished in exploring European unity in a new direction. One suggestion was the objective of forming a general common market.

As France and Germany had successfully begun to forge their new unity in the Coal & Steel Community, Britain’s older European constituency, the smaller nations, had begun to look over their shoulders. The Dutch—and that ubiquitous figure in Britain’s European odyssey, the Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak—were prime movers in the audacious resolutions adopted at Messina which had been purged of the supranational language and ambitions which Britain had declared “unacceptable” to her in the past. It was hoped thereby to enlist Britain in a fresh start and re-examination of “unity in Europe.” The junior

minister in the Foreign Office under Anthony Eden at that time, and with responsibility for European affairs, was Anthony Nutting.

NUTTING: "I think it was the last and the most important bus that we missed. I think we could still have had the leadership of Europe if we had joined in Messina. I remember Spaak saying to me some time afterwards (the Treaty of Rome had been signed and we were outside the European Economic Community), 'You know, you have no conception of how much we needed your moral leadership in Europe. We were people all of whose countries had been occupied or had been (in the case of the Germans, and Italy) under a fascist government. It had been the patriotic duty of everybody during the War in those countries to oppose the government, to oppose authority, to lie, to cheat, to do everything which it was your patriotic duty not to do. Suddenly to reverse it, suddenly, when the enemy was defeated, to get out of the way of lying and cheating, withholding taxes, engaging in black-market activities and all that—it was a tremendous moral crisis in our countries. We felt that we needed the moral leadership of Britain who had never had to make these choices, never had to do these underhand things as their patriotic duty. You who were untainted by this, you could have led us, you could have given us that essential leadership which we needed. . . .'"

But, he said, "You missed the bus and then when you tried to come in afterwards because you realised that we'd got something good going that you wanted to join, well, then, of course, not unnaturally the price was rather high. . . ."

IT WAS BECAUSE the subsequent price was high (and it remains a subject of contemporary argument) that a rueful light has shone subsequently on British diplomacy at the time of Messina.

But the defeat of the federalists and the downfall of the European Defence Community had been so absolute a rejection of that model of European integration that it is plain a complacency settled upon its opponents. In the Foreign Office there was a feeling that in so far as Europe was concerned British policy had "got it made", and that St George had slain the federalist dragon. The rise so early and of what would prove to be so important a phoenix as the one which took shape at Messina and emerged as the "European Common Market"—that was dismissed as improbable.

This is how, in the view of one of its younger members, the British Cabinet looked at Europe in the aftermath of the Defence Community's collapse in 1954. The President of the Board of Trade then was Peter Thorneycroft.

THORNEYCROFT: "Those who believed that we

were eventually going to find our place in Europe didn't cease in that belief. Ministers would change. Opinions would change. We were not without friends, and we quietly went on with our work. I was concerned at that time in 1954 more particularly with persuading the Conservative Party of the virtues of free trade. I think it's worth dwelling on that because at that moment there was another battle going on. Remember, the Conservative Party trading policies at that time really stemmed from Imperial Preference. This was the Ark of the Covenant to the Conservative Party. I remember the Blackpool Conference of the Conservative Party in 1954 when Leo Amery (who was the great protagonist of the old school, of the leaders of the Imperial Preference group) had put down a motion condemning the general agreement on tariffs and trade. I remember the discussion in the Cabinet. I said I wished to oppose this Motion, and the Cabinet said I would lose. We had the debate round the Cabinet table, and Winston Churchill, at the end of it, said: Let him try! I won the debate and, in a way, it was an important thing to happen because it was the defeat of the 'old guard.' It was the end really, emotionally, of the old concept of Imperial Preference inside the Conservative Party. We were free from that moment to move forward into the wider, freer world of the general agreement on tariffs and trade, and the rest."

—But you rightly infer that the "pro-Europeans" like you and Macmillan in the Cabinet were a tiny minority. You were also repeatedly outvoted. What is your assessment of where British policy stood later in 1954, as the hand-over to Eden as Prime Minister is coming in 1955, and with it also the effort to relaunch the idea of "Europe" at Messina?

THORNEYCROFT: "It was in a way a lull, really, because the European struggle, which in some ways was the important one both from the point of view of foreign policy and of trade and commerce, was put aside. I mean we couldn't advance any further. It was in limbo."

—But Stalin is dead; he died the year before. The Indo-China war is coming to an end in the first phase of the Geneva Conference. Do you have the feeling that with the defeat of EDC coupled with the apparent lessening of international tensions, the drive and energy behind European integration had, for the moment, dissipated?

THORNEYCROFT: "The Europeans were still very interested in what was going on. But as far as this country is concerned, we went into retreat. A lot of our subsequent problems, of course, stem from this. At the very moment when we ought to have been shaping the European Community, we were on the sidelines."

—Why were we?

THORNEYCROFT: "We stood aside because there

was no strategic decision in the British Cabinet to play a part in Europe; and they felt that if they went in, they would be committed to it."

BRITISH POLICY OVER EUROPE was "in limbo or retreat." While Eden had been forced to give a guarantee that Britain's Army would remain on the Continent, and in that sense (and in terms of Britain's ultimate destiny as a member of the European Community) British policy seemed, in the words of the old hymn, to "nightly pitch its moving tent a day's march nearer home...", Anthony Eden now turned away and continued to assert vigorous views about the validity and ability of Britain to continue her world role.

The coincidence of economic recovery under the Conservatives with the relaunching of the "European idea" at Messina was no encouragement (in the short term, at least) for any serious reappraisal of Britain's position. Rather the opposite. This was allied to the fact that the most significant factor governing foreign policy in the decade of the 1950s, while the Conservatives held office, lay in the personality and the objectives of Anthony Eden. Eden's principal Private Secretary at the Foreign Office, refreshing his memory from the diary he kept of his time with Eden, was Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh.

SHUCKBURGH: "I think all those people who were the bosses in the Second World War found it impossible to believe that we didn't still have great influence really beyond what we did have. Eden was aping Winston a great deal. There'd been so much of this going about as top people, deciding everything for the world, I thought they'd find it very difficult to get unaccustomed to that."

—And you too?

SHUCKBURGH: "I suppose we all overestimated the role that we played. Yes, I suppose we did."

—Was there any feeling that the Imperial Mission which Britain had, the Empire on which the sun never set, that this mission was over and that Britain was returning to some kind of pre-Imperial destiny in Europe?

SHUCKBURGH: "I can only say, from what I remember of my thinking, that we were over-stretched, and that we musn't be over-stretched. We ought to get away from situations which we couldn't maintain—like the Canal Zone, and so on. But even when we had done that, we would still be a really great, remarkable people, who everybody would be likely to respect and want leadership from. I think that's perhaps where we stuck somewhat. Although I'm not sure we wholly exaggerated; because I still think there was an ele-

ment of truth in this: that we are able to exercise more influence in foreign affairs than if we'd been the Dutch, so to speak, who also had a great Empire once.

It was extremely difficult to reduce your status. It always is. I remember Eden was trying to get out of the Canal Zone—being sniped at for being a 'scuttler' on that. You can't go round giving up too many things at the same time because, you see, you've got to carry the country with you. I do think we were going through the great difficulties of knowing that we were over-extended, but not really being able to do it all in the order or speed at which, if you'd been just a thinker, you might have suggested was right."

—How much time did Eden think Empire and Commonwealth had to run? How much time did he think he had?

SHUCKBURGH: "I think he thought he had time. He had a high opinion—rightly—of his skills as a diplomat. In all these negotiations conducted over Persia, over Egypt, and so on, he really thought he would be able to bring about the necessary adjustments of our position, and even reach solutions. He was always believing that solutions could be found, and that he could find them. I think he thought there was time."

BUT THIS GENERAL CONTEXT in which Britain was about to make her responses to the invitation to start as a founder member of the Common Market is not complete without a brief reminder of the American attitude to Britain and Europe.

Britain could rightly claim this was not always consistent or clearly stated, or openly declared. Sir John Colville, Churchill's Private Secretary, says it was not raised directly with Churchill during either the Truman or Eisenhower administrations. There was a division in US policy-making circles and a debate about whether it was in the best interests of the United States for Britain to take the path of European Unity, a debate which went on for some years. Eisenhower, while he was still supreme commander of the NATO alliance, had made almost an



This other Eden.

intervention with his Guildhall Speech in London in 1951 (at the time of the Schuman Plan), intended to encourage a change in British attitudes. There followed the protracted wrangle over the "European Defence Community." It is true that Eden, in justifying Britain's decisive abstention, was able to make use of a remark to him by Eisenhower that British participation in the EDC would, at that stage, be "premature"—but Eisenhower had become (as Supreme Commander) and remained (as President) a convinced European. At the time of Messina he was at the very apex of US policy. The head of "policy planning" at the State Department in the Eisenhower administration was Robert Bowie.

BOWIE: "He really did have an interest in the European unity idea and in its achievement. I think the Guildhall Speech in 1951 was very much a reflection of his own thinking. It was a very eloquent plea for Europe to unite for the benefits, both political and economic, and in terms of leadership. I think he stated this as a personal plea to the British; he thought he had special standing with the British because of his close contacts during the War and his known friendship with the British; and in making the speech at the Guildhall, he intended to say to them: You really are not reacting as you should to the opportunity offered by—for example—the Schuman Plan, which had been launched just about a year before."

—So it's true to say that there is an important difference of emphasis. Dean Acheson, in the previous administration, had been largely agnostic about this. He could see the British reservations and to some extent sympathised with them. Would you say that had subtly but importantly changed with the advent of Eisenhower?

BOWIE: "I think Dulles, too, was strong in his belief that this was a useful idea which the United States should support; and so I think that both the combined effect of Dulles and Eisenhower's personal interest probably did make a difference in the degree to which the United States made clear that it did support this movement."

—But would you say that when the Eisenhower Administration came in, its own beliefs and thinking, coupled with the thinking as it evolved in the previous Administration, added up by this time to a clearly formulated idea on the part of US policy-makers that Britain's true destiny lies in Europe?

BOWIE: "Yes, I think that's a fair statement. I think by that time the feeling was that Great Britain had not taken the proper measure of its own actual potential in the world as it existed, and that it was perhaps holding back from joining Europe for reasons which really were outdated. That the belief, somehow, in the Commonwealth and the 'special relationship' with the United States—and indeed

the larger global role, which was certainly an image in the minds of a good many of the leading foreign-affairs people in Britain—was essentially no longer a valid picture of Britain's possibilities. Therefore, Britain was making a mistake in not joining this effort to construct a European system."

THE AMERICAN PERCEPTION was wholeheartedly opposed by Anthony Eden. Eden's belief in his own long-established, and only recently confirmed and acknowledged diplomatic authority—following his rescue of the Western Alliance from the wreckage of the EDC—can only have reinforced his own determination, allied with that of the Foreign Office, to fight a successful rearguard action for Britain. Now the unwelcome irritant to the Foreign Office of European integration, so lately thought to be quiescent, suddenly arose again.

In May 1955, Anthony Eden, now Prime Minister, had won the general election with a large majority of 57 and four clear years to rule.

On 7 June 1955, the Foreign Ministers of the Six (including France), after their meeting in Messina in Sicily, issued an invitation to Britain to take part in a fresh attempt, starting from scratch, to explore European Unity in a new direction. The six governments, who were acting on an initiative from Holland and Belgium—the "Benelux" countries—supported by France, "wished to emphasise that they were unanimous in their hope that the British government would participate in this work in the closest possible manner." And "this work" meant in practice that all the countries would agree to set up committees working in Brussels in the ensuing months to thrash out the whole issue together. The chief of the Belgian delegation set up at the Messina conference in 1955 was Jean Charles, Baron Snoy.

BARON SNOY: "I remember that at Messina we were of course in a very difficult position, because it was six months after the rejection of the EDC Treaty. We knew that even on the French side we ought to be extremely cautious about asking them to abandon something of their sovereignty. Therefore we presented as a BENELUX formula at Messina a great number of possibilities to start the merger again of the principal European countries. We proposed at Messina either the Transport pool, or the Electricity pool, or the Nuclear-energy pool, or perhaps a merger on Customs duties and commercial policy. And we didn't know if we should select a Free Trade Area formula or a Customs Union formula for these last ideas. Everything was open. The British were invited to sit with us to discuss the merits of the different kinds of systems we ought to accept."

—And invited as a full and equal partner?

BARON SNOY: "As a full and equal partner."

SO IT WAS THAT what became known as the "relance", the relaunching of the European idea, began. As Baron Snoy says, the BENELUX initiative at Messina put forward the concept of a Common Market, to be achieved in stages, as one possibility. This was the suggestion of the Dutch Foreign Minister, van Beyen, who at once came to London to explain the intentions of the Messina resolutions at a series of meetings presided over by "Rab" Butler, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He also delivered the formal invitation to Britain to take part. The head of these affairs in the Dutch Foreign Office during the Messina period was Dr Ernst van der Beugel.

VAN DER BEUGEL: "There had been a very strong feeling in Holland that the cooperation of the British was indispensable, more from a political point of view than from a purely economic. But there was no consensus, even in Holland, on this; and Beyen, who was the Foreign Minister who handled this matter, belonged to those who hoped that the British would come in, but who were absolutely determined to go on if they would not come in."

—*What can be said about the responses that he got, first of all from Macmillan, who was Foreign Secretary?*

VAN DER BEUGEL: "I think that when he talked to Macmillan he got the impression that there was a chance. There was disappointment when it proved not to be true."

THE FORMAL BRITISH REPLY was written by Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan, and said that as the Six would no doubt be aware, there were special difficulties for Britain in any proposal for a European Common Market. But what kind of Common Market was, following Messina, an open question. Whether a Customs Union, with a common external tariff (which Britain had consistently opposed since the earliest post-War years as incompatible with the Commonwealth interest), or a Free Trade area was a matter for argument. The Six plus one, Britain, would repair (it was suggested) to Brussels. There under the coordinating chairmanship of the Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak—a generous Anglophile who'd been a War-time exile in London—they should together try to find agreement. The odious pre-conditions for negotiations with Britain which had made the case for rejection of the Schuman Plan for Coal & Steel five years earlier (i.e. a willingness to yield national sovereignty to a common higher

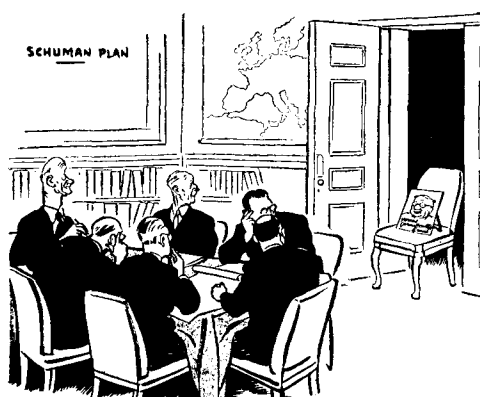
authority) were conspicuous by their absence from the Messina invitation. There were no pre-conditions.

The six months which followed the Messina Conference from June until November 1955 (while the "Spaak committees", as they were known, worked out the design for what became the Common Market) assumed in retrospect great importance for Britain. Their consequences did no less than alter the future course of British history.

The European countries appointed significant political figures, as in the case of Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, to the work of the Brussels committees which began in July. The British did not. The British sent neither a delegate nor an observer, but a "representative." In diplomatic terms it was an ambiguous status. It signalled the continuation of past policy, suggesting "close association" but in the end "detachment from" full involvement in Europe. It showed that Britain still considered initiatives over European integration in economic rather than political terms; as had been the case with the Schuman Plan five years before, so too now. Following Messina the British representative sent to Brussels, to attend at what would prove to be the birth of the Common Market, was a senior civil servant—the Under-Secretary for the Board of Trade, Russell Bretherton.

BREThERTON: "Spaak summoned a meeting of what we called the steering committee on the 1st of July to get the thing going. I was a little startled when I got there to find that—besides Spaak himself who obviously was presiding—the West German Representative was Dr Walter Hallstein (the Foreign Minister) and the general level was that sort of thing; and there was I an Under-Secretary from the Board of Trade. I have never before or since been called Your Excellency!"

—*Are you telling me that London did not appreciate the political character of the thing, or at least you didn't until you actually got there?*



BRETHERTON: "No, I don't think we appreciated it; at least I didn't appreciate the political nature until I got there. This was all part, you see, of the London view, which was that they took the Messina resolutions as they were: economic matters.

First of all, we were very much in two minds about whether we wanted Europe on the economic side to get closer together or not. The appraisal made by the Foreign Office—and others, I think, at the time of or immediately after Messina—was that nothing would happen. There would be meetings no doubt and a show, but nothing more than that. Though not everybody believed that, that was the official Foreign Office view; they in fact, circulated an 'Intel' to that effect."

LORD THORNEYCROFT, the President of the Board of Trade, reminded us that inside the Cabinet Messina had prompted no fresh thinking or reappraisal and that in consequence British policy was, at this time, more or less in limbo. Britain considered that the good and sufficient expression of European integration continued to be OEEC (the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation), set up to administer US aid to Europe under the Marshall Plan in 1947 and still the means of coordinating broad economic objectives in Europe. And, therefore, from the outset, the official British responses to the invitation to participate fully and without conditions in writing a new design of economic integration (suggested in the Messina resolution) seem to have had a rather world-weary ring to them.

BRETHERTON: "On the whole it was felt that we couldn't really stand out for complete non-participation in the whole thing. There were several reasons for that. One of them was that we were rather in trouble in OEEC because we had been pressing the Europeans, all of them, too soon and too hard for convertibility of sterling, which the Europeans thought would have a pretty bad effect on mutual relations, on trade between the countries, and so on. Secondly, because the Foreign Office anyhow had divined that our policy in Europe was to be helpful and cooperative but entirely without commitment, and if we could operate that policy in these circumstances that was the one to operate."

—*Did we accept that, when they called in the famous "fourth clause" of the resolution for a Common Market, did we accept that the form this was likely to take was open for genuine discussion and argument?*

BRETHERTON: "Certainly, certainly. Of course, if we had been able to say, or had said without meaning it like the French, that we accepted the principle, 'agreed in principle', we could have got whatever kind of Common Market we wanted. I

have no doubt about that at all."

—*Therefore, the fact that we chose not to participate and therefore not to influence the final outcome is absolutely fundamental.*

BRETHERTON: "Yes. It was the result of an established policy which, as I say, was cooperation without commitment.

I don't remember that anybody made that point, at the time, certainly. I think it was assumed that behind it there were the Federal ambitions, though I think everybody also agreed that the Federal ambitions were not shared, apart from ourselves, by everybody in Europe."

—*Spaak, in his "Memoirs" says that as far as he was concerned it was an earnest of their hope that we might yet find our way to take part and, above all, that they wanted to prevent the Europe which was taking shape from being confined to the Six. Did we share that view?*

BRETHERTON: "Well, you see, I don't think we thought that Europe was taking shape in those days."

"COOPERATION WITHOUT COMMITMENT" was the dusty answer with which to arm Bretherton when the Spaak committees were "hot for 'certainties'" about Britain's attitude to the Common Market (whether Customs Union or Free Trade Area), and with Spaak himself considering he was "holding open the door" for Britain. Another witness who was both at Messina and involved with the Spaak committees in Brussels throughout this period was Spaak's *directeur du cabinet*, Robert Rothschild.

ROTHSCHILD: "Bretherton came for those first meetings—I still see his face in front of me in spite of the number of years which have passed. He usually had a rather cynical and amused smile on his face. He looked at us like naughty children—but not really mischievous, enjoying themselves, playing the sort of game which had no relevance and no future."

AS ROTHSCCHILD IMPLIES, the negative constraints of Bretherton's instructions and therefore Britain's representational attitude were ill-received, particularly by the more enthusiastic Europeans in Brussels.

BRETHERTON: "I spent all my time in fact in the Common Market Committee (the main one which was presided over by a Dutch professor), and it was a very good body really. Everybody there, including myself, was prepared to talk very frankly. What we were concerned with was, in fact, looking

at the difficulties and problems and forms of a Common Market. A Free Trade Area wasn't ruled out.

At that time a Free Trade Area of the Six or Seven, or whatever, was looked at to some extent. We met in a building in Brussels in an extremely hot room in what turned out to be a very hot summer, which made a difference. We met steadily from, usually, Tuesday to Friday in every week from the 1st July until the 9th August, if I remember rightly. Spaak had intended (and said at the beginning) that he was going to work right through the holiday period. But when we got into August this was more than could be stood even by the Europeans, and a lot of people found that their daughters were getting married or their grandmothers were getting buried; and eventually he agreed that we should have a break. Originally, I think, only for ten days, but in fact it lasted until the 1st of September."

—Have you read what Spaak said about you in his "Memoirs"?

BRETHERTON: "No, I haven't read Spaak's *Memoirs*."

—May I quote it to you now?

BRETHERTON: "I should be most interested."

—"Throughout our talks", Spaak says, "Mr Bretherton's attitude was one of discreet scepticism."

BRETHERTON: "Yes."

—"While the representatives of the other powers went about their work with a will, he remained silent for the most part."

BRETHERTON: "That is not true."

—"And when he did join in, it was only to express doubt about whether his country could accept whatever idea looked like being the basis of agreement at any given time."

BRETHERTON: "I would defend myself against those charges. What I did do, of course, was to discuss the technical aspects of the thing, and in particular, the point that was a very important one was that if you were going to have a Customs Union, which was what all of them rather assumed was the form, there were great difficulties about that for us because of our Imperial Preference arrangements tying up with the Commonwealth. And I did say (and other people, I think, accepted it) that a Free Trade Area would be a good deal easier. But the French didn't like that, and everybody I think at that time saw troubles about it on the technical side; and also I think they felt that this Free Trade Area wasn't a close enough thing from a European political point of view.

I think that point did come in there, certainly."

BRETHERTON'S INSTRUCTIONS of "No Commitments" left little room for manoeuvre. The Cabinet Minister who briefed Bretherton on his departure for Brussels was the President of the Board of Trade, Lord Thorneycroft.

THORNEYCROFT: "This reflected the attitude of the Government at that time. We were not participating in these talks; we had not taken a decision to go into Europe; the Foreign Office who really decide what we do abroad were opposed to the whole concept of the thing; and I should think perhaps we were rather lucky to have got anybody of Bretherton's ability to at least be there."

—Can I quote you, though, what Spaak said about him? That nothing could have more clearly outlined the attitude of the total British indifference to Europe than the series of negative interventions made by this luckless representative in the debates of the Brussels committee.

THORNEYCROFT: "Yes, yes. Well, no doubt he was a very loyal and able official, but he was sent there with a brief not to commit this country to anything, which was the Cabinet's decision. One can't place any responsibility or blame on Mr Bretherton's shoulders. He was a keen European and one of the most brilliant officials I've ever had the privilege of working with."

—But you sent him with a set of negative instructions?

THORNEYCROFT: "Oh, he had a completely negative brief—he was bound to. The Cabinet had really decided against the European concept."

AS THE WEEKS PASSED in the summer of 1955 and Britain continued to withhold any signal of positive commitment to the work of the Spaak committee in Brussels, where the experts were studying the Messina resolutions for a Common Market and EURATOM, important personal efforts were made by the Dutch and the Belgians (acting, in part, as emissaries of the Six) to try and persuade a change of mind in London.

Spaak himself, the Belgian Foreign Minister, came to London to see "Rab" Butler, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and also the Foreign Secretary, Harold Macmillan. And if the British had been considered to be "detached" in Brussels they were apparently found to be coldly distant in London. Spaak was accompanied on these visits by Rothschild.

ROTHSCHILD: "Spaak spent 30 to 45 minutes in this conversation with Butler trying to convince

him that the idea was a good one, and that we should have the British Government with us. And it was obvious that he was not convincing Butler. I still see him, very immobile, holding one hand with the other hand and looking at Spaak without saying a word, and the colder he became the warmer Spaak became, and the warmer Spaak became the colder and colder Butler obviously became. After a while we realised that it was no use going on. Very friendly, we said goodbye and we went off. It was a beautiful day, and we walked along the street and suddenly Spaak was rather gloomy, turned round to us, and said, 'Have I been obscene?'

We were rather taken aback by that question. 'Why obscene, Sir?'

'Well, I don't think I could have shocked him more when I tried to appeal to his imagination than if I would have taken my trousers off.'

And that was the sort of conversation that we had with Butler. Macmillan was a very different man, of course.

I don't remember exactly the details but, to make things short, we had the feeling that Butler was very opposed, Eden was very opposed, and Macmillan less opposed. Macmillan was easy; Spaak was a man of imagination, and as I said, of a certain warmth, of great warmth. He saw the future of Europe in many fields—military, economic, and financial integration. That was what he tried to appeal to with the Ministers. Eden obviously saw that integration was a wonderful thing—for the Continentals, but not for the British.

I remember one speech he made at that time in public somewhere where he said, 'I feel in my bones that we are not Europeans.' To which Spaak said, 'That's a funny place to have thinking.'

ROBERT ROTHSCHILD, Spaak's *directeur du cabinet*, referred to Anthony Eden's key speech in the United States (at Columbia University in 1952) three years before Messina. Eden had said about the frequent suggestions that Britain should become more closely linked with a Federation on the continent of Europe, "We know in our bones that we cannot do it."

The attitudes of the smaller countries were reflecting a profound disappointment with the British outlook. However, Britain was listening not so much to their advocacy, but to the voice of France. The British view—that nothing much would happen in Brussels and that the Messina resolutions should not be taken too seriously—was bolstered by the belief in London that France would go no distance at all, given her traditional protectionist policies, towards a Common Market. This general British conclusion proved, of course, ultimately to be a near-fatal lack of insight into the vitality of the underlying will on the Continent to make a common cause and a break with the past.

The Foreign Office maintained its line in the knowledge that Bretherton, the man on the spot in Brussels, was beginning to express some disquiet in his reports and, towards the end of the summer of 1955, beginning to urge contrary policy advice.

BRETHERTON: "The policy advice that I gave, certainly in the latter part of the period, after the holiday (and to some extent, I think, before), was that this was much more serious than they thought it was. I kept on saying that. In fact, of course, they laid on quite a considerable study in London of the economic advantages of our going into a Customs Union; and the disadvantages to us if there were one and we were left out. . . ."

IT WON'T BE UNTIL 1986, under the 30-year rule, that the findings of that study will become known publicly. But there is private evidence that HOPS, as it was called—"The Home and Overseas Policy Sub-committee" of the Cabinet, chaired by R. A. Butler—later came to the conclusion that, while it was probable that Britain stood to gain economically from going in, the balance of advantages as seen from London was insufficient to compel any rethink of policy.

After the holiday season in the late summer of 1955, the Spaak committees in Brussels were coming to the point where decisions would be called for and treaties prepared. Britain and Europe were approaching a parting of the ways.

BRETHERTON: "I had then, and I have now, a great admiration for Spaak; I liked him and I got on personally, I think very well with him."

—When you started telling London what he was up to and it was more serious than you had imagined or they were imagining back home, what responses did you get?

BRETHERTON: "Well, here again, you see, most of this was taking place in the holiday period and I don't remember that I got any or much response. One point, because it bears on the business, I said that I think this is very much more serious than you think. I did write a letter which I have and could quote—in September—saying that I thought it was serious."

But the big question was the French. At that stage, Crappier, who was the French delegate (whom I also knew very well in the OEEC) came and made a verbal statement—I suppose he must have had authority for doing it—that the then French government was very anxious that we should be involved in this, that if we would say clearly that we wanted to go in and take part—not necessarily precisely in the Customs Union, but in some close relationship to the affair—he thought that France would come along pretty fast. But if we continued to say we weren't committed, the French

would do nothing and he thought the Italians wouldn't either. Now you've got to remember that this was one French government, and in February 1956, or six months later, of course they had some elections and the Mollet government came in, which was much more European in its approach."

—Yes, and Mollet was Anglophile. I find that fascinating. In other words, this Crappier remark was thought back in London to be very significant. . . .

BRETHERTON: "No, I don't think anybody took any notice of it. The general view then was, in London, still that nothing was going to happen, and that anyhow this rather strengthened the view that the French would wreck it in any case."

—Not allow it to happen.

BRETHERTON: "Not allow it to happen. I mean, that accorded with our deeply held view."

—Can I put a personal question to you? While faithfully executing the instructions you had been given on behalf of the British government, did you yourself begin to change your mind while this conference was going on?

BRETHERTON: "Oh, yes."

—Were there opportunities available to us which we should, in your view, have accepted?

BRETHERTON: "Well, I think, it all depended on that. I said quite frankly in the letter I wrote, which I can quote to you if you like: If we are prepared to take a firm line, that we want to come in and will be a part of this, we can make this body into whatever we like. But if we don't say that, something will probably happen and we shan't exercise any influence over it."

—Our position before, over Coal & Steel, had been the opposite, for example. As we could not have made that into something which we wanted, we rejected it. I mean, you were giving absolutely 180° contrary advice three or four years later. After Messina, you were saying that the attitudes now were more "flexible" and there was the possibility of accommodation with which our interests coincided.

BRETHERTON: "I think the balance of power, so to speak, was very different. You see, the 'Coal & Steel' was France and Germany. In this one there was BENELUX and Italy, who were on our side all the way through and wanted us in desperately. The BENELUX people had an essentially low-tariff free-trade liberal attitude; the Italians wanted the same; and the Germans, of course, were in the wider field—they were certainly very anxious to have a pretty liberal kind of organisation. I am sure that if, in fact, we had been able to say from that time, 'We want to come in', and we negotiated, we could have got something very much more what we

wanted. Except, possibly, agriculture—that might have been very troublesome, certainly. I summed up by writing that 'We have the power to guide the conclusions of this conference in almost any direction we like but beyond a certain point we cannot exercise that power without becoming responsible for the results. . . .' I don't think anybody took any notice."

IN CONSEQUENCE there is little to make one think that Britain gave any serious consideration to joining any form of Common Market in this vitally important period.

IN SEPTEMBER 1955, with British policy still standing unchanged at "no commitment", a meeting of Foreign Ministers was called at Nordwijk in the Netherlands to review progress of the "Spaak Committees." The British Foreign Secretary, who was then Harold Macmillan, with his avowedly pro-European credentials, was invited.

BRETHERTON: "The background of all this, you must remember, is that there was no Press interest at all. Public opinion was not interested. Most Ministers were not interested. Macmillan, although he plays it up a good deal in his *Memoirs*, took no active part in this. The Foreign Office line on it was that nothing would happen, and anyhow our first care should be to preserve our relations, our 'special relationship', with America. That was a bit odd when the Americans were pushing this themselves.

There was a Ministerial Meeting of the Six early in September to which Macmillan was invited. He had some other fairly important engagements; and he didn't go. He said that he would send an official instead. Spaak and the Six Ministers said: No, we won't accept an official—you must send a Minister



or not at all. But this was still in the holiday period."

IT WAS ALSO EVIDENCE of growing impatience with Britain's demonstrably negative attitude, as London continued to preserve an unconcerned detachment.

FROM THE OUTSET much of the steam behind the relaunching of the European idea had been supplied by the tenacity and creative energy of Jean Monnet.

Monnet was a very close friend of Spaak's and had been closely concerned with the drafting of the Messina resolution. Monnet had calculated that despite the rebuff to his concepts which had been made so manifest with the defeat of the Defence Community, France could not afford to say *Non* a second time. That calculation differed, as we've noted, from the British assessment. It was based on the knowledge that the *rapprochement* with Germany implicit in the Coal & Steel Community had gone much deeper than was supposed in London. An effort by Bretherton during the holiday period in London to get more leverage in his instructions was unsuccessful. Monnet's authority was unquestionably reinforced as Britain maintained a refusal to any commitment to the outcome of the work in Brussels.

One who had personal experience of that was the Director-General of economic and military affairs in the Dutch Foreign Office throughout the time of Messina to the signing of the Treaty of Rome, Dr Ernst van der Beugel.

VAN DER BEUGEL: "Monnet's personal influence was tremendous. As to the British, Monnet took a very clear decision that you should never make a compromise and that the British would come in if the *fait accompli* was created. He exerted his influence in two ways: one you will probably know, the second you might not. One was, of course, the 'Monnet Committee', which was composed of the parliamentary leaders of the Continental parlia-

ments. It was my personal experience that when the Dutch tried to score a point in Brussels, we were immediately summoned by the parliamentary committee with the 'Monnet message', and they told us to stop being difficult and just to go along. That was one channel. The other channel was the Americans; at that time, 1956-57, it was still the Eisenhower administration. Monnet was on the closest possible terms with Dulles and with the network of the Eastern establishment. The US Ambassador came to see me, and said that he hoped the Dutch government would change its position, and so forth and so on. It was the greatest influence possible."

—It would seem obvious then that, at this time, the British were in effect bypassed, that they become less relevant and less important, if you have American support plus the Continental will.

VAN DER BEUGEL: "Yes, but that was the position: the Continental support plus American support. Monnet was not 'French' in the sense that he wanted to have the British out. Not at all. Monnet was absolutely honest that he wanted to have the British in. But he wanted to have the British in after the *fait accompli* was created. He didn't want to compromise."

BY NOVEMBER 1955, it was clear that the expert committees could go no further without political guidance from their governments. As all the delegates (Russell Bretherton included) returned to Brussels, Monnet, together with Spaak, had managed to engineer a change in procedure which would bring matters to a head. Monnet's personal assistant, the man who eventually drafted the Treaty of Rome, was Pierre Uri.

PIERRE URI: "All of a sudden the decision was taken (by Spaak, I think), that all the committees should be disbanded. It was a waste of time, and now everything could be really reconcentrated in a small group—the President, Spaak, the Chief of each delegation, and that was all, with just one expert for each, according to the topic, and one *rapporteur*. That was how I was chosen as a *rapporteur*. Spaak asked Monnet who could do the job; and Monnet, I think without hesitation, told Spaak: Pierre Uri could do the job. And that's how I received the important mission of having to conceive the Common Market and EURATOM.

The change of method—going from various committees which are numerous (and very competent) to just the Chief of Delegation, one expert each time, and one general *rapporteur*, gave the occasion for asking the British whether they were really serious or not. That's when the first dramatic event happened. That was at the last big meeting called of the coordinating committee; and Breth-



erton as the British representative had to read the brief. I can tell you that Bretherton read it aloud in the dulllest possible voice. I'm pretty sure that he was under instruction, and that he didn't associate himself with that."

THIS MOMENT, in November 1955, when Britain said, in effect *No* to a Common Market she had been invited to design, was obviously "dramatic."

BRETHERTON: "I had perfectly clear instructions, which were to make a speech saying that we are very interested in all this and so forth, but clearly we couldn't take part in it, and we hoped that as much as possible, at any rate of the fringe things like transport and the other things, should go back to OEEC. Spaak just blew up at that point."

—Did he?

BRETHERTON: "Yes. It puzzled us at the time why he blew up in just that way, because he knew this would be our position. At least he ought to have known. But I think he was misled, because Bayen had been to London the week before and had seen the Chancellor."

—This is the Dutch Foreign Minister.

BRETHERTON: "Yes. It transpired afterwards that the Dutch Foreign Minister had reported that the British attitude was about to change, and I think Spaak thought I would come to Brussels to this meeting with some new instructions; and, of course, I hadn't got any."

—It is interesting that when you were writing home saying that it is more serious . . . we ought to be taking it more seriously, which is the inference from what you say . . . one might have expected your instructions perhaps to have been altered or reconsidered in some way. Do you feel the Cabinet gave concentrated attention to this possibility, that the whole thing might break up and Spaak might . . .

BRETHERTON: "No, I don't think the Cabinet took much notice of it at that time. My instructions for going to the meeting in November were certainly much more rigid, and the Foreign Office instigation had even stronger weight to the 'put-it-all-back-into-OEEC' argument than before. And those are what I had. For the first time I had what really amounted to almost a written instruction, I mean something almost to read out, you see, which I had not had before, and didn't want."

—When you say Spaak blew up, can you slow down the explosion and just remember what he said?

BRETHERTON: "As soon as I had spoken, Spaak just said, Well, I am astonished and very hurt at this. You are just sticking to your guns. England

has not moved at all, and I am not going to move either. And he then went on and said, Well, clearly, you can't take part in the completion of a Final Report on this (we told him before that we couldn't, in fact, agree to take part in 'recommendations'). That will be done, completed by the Heads of Delegations only—and you, of course, will not be on that delegation any longer, on the steering committee or anything of that sort. . . . I will 'report' it myself, I think he said, before Christmas. In fact, he didn't produce a report until about February."

—In his "Memoirs" Spaak uses the word "withdrawal" himself because he feels that because our position was inflexible it was we who withdrew rather than . . .

BRETHERTON: "Yes. . . . In fact it was Spaak who said, You must not attend any more."

—And he says this: "This wait-and-see attitude by Britain persisted until the famous meeting in Venice in April 1956, and when we resumed our negotiations for the Common Market, the British representative was nowhere to be seen and his government did little or nothing to either justify or explain their absence. . . ."

BRETHERTON: "Well, this is a very biased, weighted thing. The point was, we had been invited to Brussels by Spaak and we were there at his invitation, and he changed the structure of the thing at the November meeting, as he explained. So that in fact we should not be there, could not be there. He said, in fact, that 'my final report must be completed by people who are committed to recommendations.' We were not committed, of course, and we were not invited, and we never went again."

AND THERE, IN HIS OWN WORDS, Russell Bretherton is in effect rereading the burial service over Britain's first encounter with the Common Market. He reminds us that there was a British "veto" long before the more notorious one pronounced by General de Gaulle—the British refusal of "Europe" in 1955.

The week before this dramatic meeting in Brussels, the last at which Britain (in the person of Bretherton) was represented, there was a last-minute attempt to enlist British membership of the Common Market. The Dutch Foreign Minister, van Beyen, came to London a second time. The first had been in June, immediately after the Messina conference, when he explained its purpose and results to a series of meetings presided over by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, R. A. Butler; and now (a week before the British withdrawal) six months later he came again to see Butler. Van Beyen left this meeting apparently with the impression that Britain was likely to change her mind. Therefore when Bretherton read out his coldly dismissive brief from London, bad temper and mis-

trust were piled on disappointment in Europe; and it explains, perhaps. Spaak's outburst.

Ernst van der Beugel, of the Dutch Foreign Office, says that Beyen was "offended" as well as disappointed with the reply given in Brussels to his eleventh-hour visit to London to recruit Britain as a foundation member of the European Community in 1955. Lord Butler now speaks for the first time publicly about this encounter (and indirectly about the intangible influence of personalities upon policy), recalling, in his late 70's, his decisions as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Eden's government at the time of Messina and the Spaak committees which followed in Brussels.

LORD BUTLER: "The Beyen business I remember quite well, because I was rather surprised that the Dutch Foreign Minister should take such a big part. I got very bored with him, and so did everybody else; and so in the early part we, I'm afraid, rather cold-shouldered him. Then on the second occasion when he came over, which was more business-like and there were all these talks, I think it possible that I listened. And the word 'listened' is very important, because what I mean by that is that I was not combative, or against, or rude; and I think that may have given him the impression that he had made an impression. But after he had gone—I consulted with my

colleagues—I had not betrayed my country in any way by wrong words, but I think that I had been sensibly sympathetic to him, and had overcome (on the advice of some of my advisers) my personal repugnance to him."

—*Repugnance? Why repugnance?*

BUTLER: "Well, he was a very pushing man. And he was always telling you what to do. I was sort of looking rather to the bigger nations, you see, and he rather took the lead, you know."

THE NEW RIGIDITY in the instructions Bretherton took back with him to Brussels for the November meeting in 1955 suggest to me that the Foreign Office, anticipating that the next stages would imply commitment to the outcome, foresaw the chance to break. Under the 30-year rule, the documents which will throw more light on this will not be available for some years yet; the detailed considerations which led to the British withdrawal from the formative discussions which led to the Common Market therefore remain obscure. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office then was Lord Caccia, who has felt unable to help. Stated at its simplest, this is the quintessential reason as given by "Rab" Butler who, with Anthony Eden, took that decision.

BUTLER: "The fact is that Britain at that time was not proposing to go into a European alliance—I can say that quite definitely."

ODDLY ENOUGH, there is an interesting and total discrepancy in the rival accounts of the technical reasons for the British withdrawal. Russell Bretherton broke in with vehement protest about this word "withdrawal" when I put it to him.

BRETHERTON: "It wasn't a decision to withdraw. We were thrown out. This is a complete misconception. We were perfectly prepared to go on being what we had been, namely an observer. But Spaak laid his plans. It became clear at that meeting in November that he had laid his plans on the basis of producing his own report, his final one which was in fact a blueprint for the Common Market. He said, and obviously quite rightly, that if you are not prepared to play on that, clearly you can't take part in forming the final report and we don't want you there. That is what he said."

BUT Bretherton's explanation of Britain's withdrawal and subsequent absence from this point onwards is put into context by Spaak's principal aide during this period, Robert Rothschild, who



R. A. BUTLER

maintains there was no question of Bretherton's being "thrown out."

ROTHSCHILD: "One day he disappeared and never came again. It was very strange."

—*The British version of this, of course, is that there was no withdrawal by them, but they were excluded.*

ROTHSCHILD: "No, that's absolutely not true."

—*How can a discrepancy like that. . .*

ROTHSCHILD: "Well, I challenge you to show me any document—in diplomacy most of those things are done in written form—I challenge you to give me any document which would prove that, at any time, certainly the chairman, and as far as I know, any of the participating governments, did anything to exclude him."

—*Well, perhaps it rests upon Spaak's own attitude. There is evidence that Spaak lost his temper with what he regarded as the British prevarication, that we were attending but not really contributing. A decision had to be made, this thing was only heading in one direction, it was going to end in an agreement—I'm trying to paraphrase Spaak's views—and, in the end, he just lost patience and said: "Well, if you're not in it, we'll go ahead without you", or words to this effect. And the British took that as exclusion. First of all, do you agree with that?*

ROTHSCHILD: "No, I don't. Let me, first of all, tell you that in a number of years—and I spent many, many years with Spaak, through practically all my professional life—I very, very seldom saw him losing patience unless he wanted to shock. He was a very good *comédien*, and during the negotiation in Brussels, at the latest stage, he once or twice made scenes; but they were put-up jobs for the result. Certainly he was very, very pro-British—sentimentally. He liked most of the British statesmen; he had relations of close friendship with Anthony Eden. He liked Macmillan. He had great respect for Churchill, whom he'd met many times during the War when he was in the government-in-exile. And he would have been more patient with the British than he would have been with the Belgians.

I never saw him lose his patience; I never saw him do anything in the chair which could be construed by Bretherton as trying to get rid of him."

PERHAPS, AFTER ALL, both accounts may be reconcilable in this explanation of Bretherton's disappearance from Brussels given by Peter Thorneycroft, who as President of the Board of Trade was his political boss. Lord Thorneycroft accepts that Britain withdrew Mr Bretherton.

THORNEYCROFT: "I think he was withdrawn because in the circumstances in which he was placed he was beyond being able to make any useful contribution. But to sit forever at a conference where you're really not able to speak on behalf of a government with any authority or with any positive proposals is not a very enviable position or a very useful one.

At that time we could have got—we can't rewrite history, you don't absolutely know what you would have got—one could have had arrangements about agriculture. Perhaps controversial, perhaps not wholly acceptable in this country, but very, very different to the Common Agricultural Policy that exists today. The assistance to European farmers would probably have been more on the lines adopted in this country. Special positions could have been negotiated for some part at any rate of Commonwealth imports and so forth. We threw away a great opportunity."

THE BRITISH WITHDRAWAL from the Spaak committees in November 1955 began the overture to a long period of mistrust and tension between Europe and Britain. Marked by the milepost of Bretherton's withdrawal from Brussels, such opportunities as were then open to Britain to make the kind of Europe she later wanted slipped inexorably away. In consequence the price next time would be higher. The European bus—or boat or train—was on the move again, and British diplomacy had waved it away, confident it was most unlikely to reach its declared objectives. There was no clear perception that a general Common Market would emerge, and so soon, as a serious rival to Britain and the Commonwealth.

Why did we not go on with our participation in the efforts to form a Common Market in 1955? A valedictory to that fateful summer, autumn, and winter should properly come from the man who as Chancellor of the Exchequer had, next to Anthony Eden, the widest knowledge and was most directly concerned in a decision which marked the parting of the ways between Britain and Europe.

BUTLER: "Well, I can tell you, better I think than probably anybody living, because I was at that time Chairman of the OEEC. At that time Britain was regarded as the normal chairman of Europe, and I was in the chair for nearly four years running, and I spoke French and German. The French government, at that time, if you remember, was in disarray. They always arrived late, and we thought that we were very important.

When we heard that the Six were meeting in Messina, we attributed it largely to the Dutch Foreign Minister, Beyen, who was very important at that time. We were all inclined not to take it

seriously because I remember giving my almost final dinner in Paris to the OEEC (I suppose it was for about 60 or 70 people) and making a remark saying that excavations were proceeding at Messina in which we were not taking part. I wasn't very rude . . . we were not taking part. . . ."

—*Archaeological excavations!*

BUTLER: "Yes. I always remember that because it was, in my view, a definite lack of foresight on the part of myself . . . much bigger on the part of the Treasury, and a very big lack of foresight on the part of the Foreign Office. But the fact is that the advice we were getting, from our Ambassador in Paris and all that, was that we should just let it go, you see? That's how the bad start, the late start for Europe, really started; and I have told you that it's partly my fault. I ought to have said: 'Well, let's get on to the new horse', you see. But I didn't. And I wasn't blamed at the time at all, and I haven't been blamed much in history. But my own feeling is that that's where we started to go wrong in regard to the European Economic Community of today.

—*You and Eden at the time of Messina—if you both took this decision that Bretherton should come home and we don't go any further—must have had some conversation together. Do you remember what passed between you?*

BUTLER: "The extraordinary thing is, you see, that it's partly a weakness of the British governmental and Cabinet system that big Ministers, especially the Foreign Office and the Treasury, are so busy and so much plugged with files, that they do depend

upon their immediate advisers a lot. And there's no doubt that the immediate advisers of Anthony and myself were advising us not to go on with this. So whenever I met Anthony, the sort of conversation was, 'Simply nothing doing, you know!' That's really what happened—which I think was shortsighted, and if Anthony were alive today, he would agree with me."

THE YEARS which immediately followed Britain's withdrawal from the Common Market negotiations ushered in more painful and increasingly visible constraints upon her former freedom of action.

They witnessed a last attempt by Britain to have it both ways, with the launching and failure of a British alternative to full membership, the industrial Free Trade area. They include the climacteric of Suez in 1956, the downfall of Anthony Eden (and with him a particular vision of Britain's rôle and position in the world). They end with the return to power in France of "nemeses" in the shape of General de Gaulle.

They were years of dilemma and perplexity. They were years in which the chair in Brussels stood empty. And abroad, Empire was unpossessed.

[A second documentary article by Michael Charlton, "A Last Step Sideways", on the desperate attempt to avert an historical reversal of mistaken policy (with the application to join the Common Market in 1961) will be published next month.]

Saint Francis

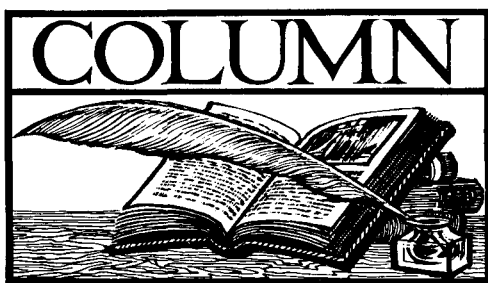
Crumbs of soil smudge
fingertips that lift
the small egg from its nest.

Cupped in his calloused
palm and held
perfectly still

to his ear,
he listens
and can hear,

through grey-green
speckled shell,
the dreaming white.

Tony Flynn



ONE NIGHT over Easter, someone tried to burn down my house. They were fairly systematic. They stacked six wood-and-canvas deckchairs against the French windows, added newspaper for kindling, and set them alight. The blaze was gratifying—so much so that a neighbour saw it from her garden, where she was walking the dog. She doused the fire before it caught the curtains: if she hadn't been so quick, a friend in the next room—a heavy sleeper—might have died in the smoke. When the police and firemen arrived, it was all over bar the mess, the smell, the repairs and the insurance claim. Any hope of catching the culprits? Hardly: this was one of several cases around Regent's Park. The motive? "Just arson around, officer"—idle destructiveness, envy, a perverse desire for kicks. It wasn't even a terrorist attack by opponents of ENCOUNTER, simply another item in London's catalogue of aimless *faits divers*.

How different, I thought, from the bang-bang dramas on television. There, the incendiary would have been in the pay of some remote Mr Big with more occult and interesting purposes—to take over the house, perhaps, because it's near an SAS staging-post (true), or because the proceeds of a bank heist were once buried in the garden (false, I think). And the trivial whodunnit would have been solved by a toothsome policewoman or a maverick private eye, unmasking Mr Big as the owner of a fashionable art gallery or psychiatric clinic, then in the last scene—with calming music replacing jumpy hubbub on the sound-track—cooking a meal for the innocents in a stripped-pine kitchen, exchanging badinage.

The precise formulae vary; but the genre is as classical as Restoration comedy or French farce. There are three main sub-divisions: police drama (like *Kojak* or Britain's *Softly Softly*); private detection (such as *The Rockford Files* or *Shoestring*); and tongue-in-cheek fantasy (as in *Charlie's Angels* or *Bognor*). The categories often overlap: some small-screen policemen behave like private eyes (or privateers); many of the latter play for laughs as well as thrills or mystery; and occasional cross-casting between the various series can turn one week's trusty ally into another's plausible fraud. But week after week, and series after series, the sagas continue, pumping myths into

our living-rooms and folklore into our minds. What do we learn from them, and why are they so popular? What can they tell us about ourselves?

We certainly learn from them. Since *Kojak* was first screened in Britain, I've heard many more Englishmen using expressions like "zilch" or "down the tubes"—to say nothing, or as little as possible, of "Who loves ya, baby?" After the first episode of *Magnum* a few weeks ago, I've been waiting to hear a Chinese ceramic pot called a "vace" instead of a "varze" (or "vawze"). And the learning's not merely linguistic. Much popular literature these days pills the sugar with technical expertise. Don't feel guilty about reading thrillers: they're packed with information—on handguns from Gavin Lyall, horses from Dick Francis, avalanches from Desmond Bagley, snowmobiles from Duncan Kyle, the central nervous system from "Adam Hall" (Elleston Trevor). The TV-series are less erudite: but they tell us about police procedure, helicopters, voodoo, gaming, drugs, explosives, *haute couture*, guard dogs, bugging devices, courtrooms, and anything else their makers find fascinating, photogenic, and not too expensive to film. Whether all the data's accurate is another question; but a more interesting one is what's being fed to us in the subtext.

PART OF IT must be deliberate. Take the heroes' names—especially those in the American series, usually more knowing than the British. Ironside, Cannon, Rockford: magnificently macho, although Ironside was a cripple, Cannon absurdly fat, and Rockford intermittently a softie. Harry O: pleasantly mysterious, until we learn that "O" stands for "Orwell", borrowing integrity as "Bob Dylan" borrows poetic overtones. Columbo and Petrocelli: a nod to the Italian Americans. *Kojak*: a wink at Central Europe, although he's played by a Greek.

And if the names are intended to have resonance, so are the personalities. Kingsley Amis once pointed out that spy stories appeal to us because the best spies look as insignificant as we do; and one of Edgar Wallace's most telling creations was "Mr J. G. Reeder", a detective who looked like the stereotype of a bank clerk—just as Agatha Christie's Miss Marples closely resembled her elderly female readers. So Ironside, like Franklin Roosevelt, triumphed over his wheelchair; the portly Cannon could outpace the swiftest hood. Poor old Harry O. took the bus to his assignment (at least in the early episodes); Rockford has a car, but it's always going wrong; Petrocelli, although a lawyer, cheats the traffic wardens; and Columbo has a modest manner and a shapeless mac. *Magnum*—another shrewd name, combining guns, champagne, and photography—gets the brush-off

from girls; Kojak, on the other hand, seems to prove that baldness can be aphrodisiac.

Few of the small-screen heroes are married. Harry O. and Rockford seem to have girl friends who now and then become girlfriends; but living as they do in beachside shacks they present a model lifestyle far removed from connubial domesticity. The envy of renegade husbands on golf or fishing weekends, they tinker with their boats, dress like beachcombers, drift about in a masculine dream-world: Rockford even lives with his father much of the time. Starsky and Hutch, "rough and tough, but friendly and likeable", carry the masculine camaraderie still further, to the borders of Butch-Cassidy camp. Each calls the other "my partner"; and when either's near death on the operating table it's as if a marriage were under threat. Nothing so intense has yet come from Britain, although Det.-Sgt Ho in *The Chinese Detective* looks so young and vulnerable that his superior's bullying of him has a near-sexual, sado-masochistic edge.

WHEN MARRIED LIFE does feature in the stories, it's usually idealised. Bognor, it's true, lives with a girl who sees his faults; and Shoestring's girl is critical too. Perhaps marriage would make all the difference. Columbo, after all, may be unromantic, but he's always loyally quoting his wife. Mr and Mrs Petrocelli—now there's a lovely couple for you: so much in love that you want to throw up. From their uxorious treacle it's almost a relief to turn to the Harts. *Hart to Hart* is *The Thin Man redivivus*, even to the point of including a pet dog. Jonathan Hart, going one better than Nick Charles, is "a self-made millionaire": he and his wife lead a quite extraordinary life in a well-guarded mansion. Despite their wealth, they have only one family retainer, and a rough diamond at that. They do most of their own cooking, and eat in the kitchen: every episode ends with them in bed. If it weren't for the constant self-mockery, *Hart to Hart* would seem shameless, promising newly-weds a lifetime of riches, excitement, and ever-youthful sexuality, in a souped-up suburbia with eternal sunshine and no children.

If these are some of the life-styles proposed by the bang-bang series, what seem to be their pre-conceptions? Here, American and British productions diverge quite sharply.

MOST OF THE BRITISH SERIES seem to have as their real subject the daily grind of office politics. This may be due to lack of money: it's obviously cheaper to shoot scenes of bickering amid plywood partitions than to go on location with speedboats and light aircraft. But I think the obsession goes deeper than that. *The Archers*,

Radio-4's "everyday story of country folk", might seem to be about farming, nature, wildlife, and so on: but if you listen carefully you'll notice that its continual theme is people-being-nasty-to-each-other.

Maybe life in a village is like that. It certainly is in British TV-portrayal of the police and "the secret service." Sarcasm, aggression, dumb insolence, veiled threats: the message seems to be that, however unpleasant you may find your own boring office, things are far worse at New Scotland Yard or Century House. So, if you get told off by your boss, you can always imagine that you're one of the small-screen cops or spies, Mr Valiant-for-Truth enmeshed in a senseless bureaucracy, but triumphant in the end. This, after all, is the part played by Len Deighton's anonymous hero, called "Harry Palmer" in the film versions. His imitators are legion, on the screen as on the page. Perhaps it's characteristic that purely private detectives are rare in British TV fantasy. Now and then an agent will have to act as a free-lance, or a former agent return to his trade in lonely secrecy like George Smiley. But the typical figure is Bognor or Shoestring, seemingly inept, doing battle like Det.-Sgt Ho with the forces of inertia and complacency higher up the bureaucratic ladder.

There are traces of this in some of the American series. Starsky and Hutch, and occasionally even Kojak, may fall foul of their superiors, especially when there's corruption in the DA's office or interference from Washington or Langley. Rockford, Harry O., Petrocelli, and Cannon, all independent operators, may clash with the police. But whereas in Britain the real enemy seems often to be the senior colleague, in America it's undoubtedly the criminal. Not every criminal, to be sure: Starsky and Hutch are on good terms with the shady Huggy Bear, and quite a few fictional prostitutes have hearts of gold. When the chips are down, though, office politics get forgotten as they seldom are on British TV.

WITH THE SOUND turned off, one might imagine that the central theme of all the American series is a hymn to Detroit. Cars are the all-pervasive image. They glide up behind the hero's vehicle, with goons in dark glasses toting guns. They sit observant outside the heroine's apartment. People snap into them, turn the key, rev up, and are away without a fumble—unless it's Rockford's jalopy they happen to have picked. And before any episode's over, there's almost bound to be a car chase, often ending in a spectacular smash. Is it because the formula's easy? Or merely because the car plays so large a part in real life in the United States? Whatever the reason, the car-as-glamour-vehicle is an important element in the subtext.

So, too, is the city. If all one knew of New York

was *Kojak*, who in his senses would go there? Dirt, danger, ugliness, squalor, violence, hatred—this is most of what we're shown. On my last visit, I spent a delightful afternoon walking through Manhattan and Central Park; after so many bang-bang series on television, I was quite surprised. And what goes for New York goes also for Los Angeles: the urban image has been unduly besmirched.

BUT THEN—look at rural America as portrayed in these tales. Every now and then, our city heroes find themselves in the sticks. They come across some case of injustice. They go to the sheriff's office, show their badges, and ask for help. "Now listen here, son, are you tryin' to tell me how to run this here town?" Hat on the back of greasy head, beer belly swagging out over a gun-belt, the sheriff shows them the door. Shortly afterwards, a dusty pick-up truck nearly kills them. The cotton-pickin' locals don't like strangers, no sir. Of course, in the end, some redneck turns out to be A-OK, and virtue triumphs; but the message is plain. Out there, you can't trust nobody. The city's a cleaner place, man, for all its dirt.

And, finally, who are the criminals? Since surprise is of the essence, convention has it that the worst criminal has to be the most unlikely suspect. As W. H. Auden pointed out, this has theological overtones: the "guilty vicarage" has to be purified by discovering and casting out the wolf in the clothing of the Lamb. Unfortunately, readers and spectators have grown wily. The purer the fleece, the more likely it is to conceal the predator. So scriptwriters and casting directors expend vast ingenuity in trying to fool the *aficionados*—in one instance, using as the villain the unassailable father-figure from *High Chaparral*. Alas, it didn't work. Overriding the "least-likely-suspect" criterion for unmasking the baddie, there's a much simpler rule of thumb. In the American series, at least, he's almost never a poor man, although he'll employ low-grade goons. Very often, he's close to his victim or to the detective, a mistakenly trusted adviser. He's usually middle-aged, well dressed, and superficially good-looking. His accent may be faintly British or European. And if in the story there's some establishment like an arts centre, a hospital, a giant corporation, or a new-fangled church, look very hard at the head of it. He's your man.

IT WOULD BE oversimplifying to suggest that all this shows a basic transatlantic contrast: that the British like their heroes to be junior bureaucrats of independent spirit, and hate their office bosses,

while Americans prefer small-scale private enterprise and hate affluent smoothies. Perhaps the contrast is between the writers, not the consumers, of the nightly pabulum. British writers often need the security of office jobs, and import into their work the stresses of their environment; Americans can afford to be free-lance and only resent those at the very top of the corporate tree. Well, it's a theory; but I don't attach too much to it. What interests me more is why these TV fantasies are so popular—and why I enjoy them myself.

Writing recently in *Country Life*, Marghanita Laski (herself a fan of detective stories) deplored the lack in many novels of what she called "a proper story." I'm inclined to agree. Life itself is full of subtle and complex anxieties: in a book I look for something more. I like mystery, surprise, suspense, excitement, wonder, and resolution—all ingredients of the greatest classic novels, many sadly missing from the highly intelligent, sensitive, wise, compassionate, and tedious productions of many novelists today. Story-telling is still a rare accomplishment: *pace* E. M. Forster, it's not a sad necessity but the central ingredient of a novel, film, or play. With a good crime story, one can at least be sure that a tale will be told. It may not reach or even attempt the heights; but it will perform the vital primary task.

THERE'S A SECOND FACTOR which is also frequently ignored. Like Agatha Christie novels, the bang-bang dramas are popular precisely because they're superficial. Not everyone wants to be stirred to the depths all the time. The greatest experiences in art are exhausting: we can't always live up to them. Very often, we want an emotional holiday, to be looked after in safety in the aesthetic equivalent of a comfortable family hotel with spectacular views—let's call it *The Christie Arms*. We like to feel we're in good impersonal hands, to know that our privacy's respected, that meals will turn up on time, and beds be made, and each day end peacefully, with no chores . . . despite the deeper knowledge that danger, disease, and death are all about us and ahead of us.

The cinema used to fulfil that humble, restorative function. Today, with rare exceptions, we go to the movies to be lacerated—with wanton cruelty, bleakly unhappy endings, or tiresome political harangues. So we turn to the small screen, where we know that relief is waiting. For all their faults and absurdities, the bang-bang TV series are standardised package-tour versions of *The Christie Arms*. In routine fashion, week after week, they'll offer us what we crave: consolation. It's no very noble pleasure, but it's one of the facets of art.

Which brings me to the third and last point, and back to where I started: someone's attempt to burn

down the house. Such incidents are now common: no one in this street has escaped an attempted burglary. The Pope is shot; so are two US Presidents; who'll be next? Ulster burns every night. Riots break out in Leeds, Brixton, the South Coast towns. There are bomb scares at Kennedy Airport. Troops besiege the Spanish Parliament; terrorists take hostages, kill businessmen in Germany, judges and statesmen in Italy, policemen, soldiers, and civilians in the UK. The Middle East crackles with threats of violence. Soviet troops kill 50,000 people in Afghanistan. In such a world, who's to say that the bang-bang dramas are out of place?

All ages have used art partly for wish-fulfilment. Fairy stories abound in golden windfalls for the poor, the ugly, or the downtrodden youngest son. One function of the novel, from Richardson onwards, was to gratify the daydreams of its readers, many of them spinsters or neglected wives.

Even Jane Austen's masterpieces offered the same satisfaction: her heroines, not all superficially attractive, finally got their men. In today's very different situation, many victims of violence or robbery might like to do the same. In the bang-bang dramas, after all, the villain's very seldom sent for trial; in the US courts, certainly, his lawyer's appeals might last for ever. Instead, his car crashes, he falls from a high window in his sinister clinic, or he's simply shot in self-defence. Try that for size in real life. Spike Milligan once did: he peppered a persistent intruder, and was taken to court himself.

So, besieged, bothered, and bewildered, we seek solace and vicarious revenge on the box. "Reader, I married him" began the last chapter of *Jane Eyre*. "Viewers, I clobbered him" might be its counterpart today.

M

Crime Fiction

Moscow



IF "MURDER" is a class phenomenon of bourgeois society, and crime is part and parcel of capitalism, then the classic Detective story—comes the Revolution—must lose all interest as an irrelevant vestige of the past. Yet all the famous detectives, from Sherlock Holmes to Nero Wolfe, continue to fascinate, even under Bolshevism. Recently a Party-line ideologue in the official cultural weekly, the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, found the persistent attachment to "Crime Fiction" a very suspicious hang-over from the bad old days. Figures like Nero Wolfe and his assistant Archie Goodwin are dismissed as the "typical representatives of a decadent middle-class society." The paper waxed indignant against the "uncritical" acceptance of American (and indeed Western) "krimmis", as exemplified by the translation and publication of a Rex Stout story in a Soviet magazine in the Far East, *Zvezda Vostoka* (Star of the East).

Everything about Nero Wolfe is darkly suspicious: from his corpulence, his passion for cultivating orchids, to his fat fees for uncovering

dastardly acts. The significance of his brilliance lay only according to the "*Literary Gazette*"—in the out-moded "sacred right of private property in knowledge and analysis. . . ." In addition to which his happy-go-lucky assistant, Goodwin, is miserably exploited, and serves only to reinforce the illusion that one can be happy in America even when one is subject to exploitation.

ALL IN ALL, Soviet readers and especially editors will just have to be more vigilant. Errors of every ideological stripe keep cropping up. Thus, in another provincial Soviet publication, *Sever* (North), there was an incorrect reference to Graham Greene as a "progressive writer." Greene, it will be recalled, once earned much official Kremlin approval for his notorious confession (in *The Times*), that given a choice between living in America or in the USSR, he would choose the latter. But this was a long time ago. Since then he has aligned himself with those so-called "Human Rights" protesters to criticise Soviet policy on the Dissident question. That makes him, if still "a creative writer", a very "contradictory personality."

"CONTRADICTIONS" are, as is well known, very dangerous phenomena. Mao Tse-tung once achieved a short-lived fame with a theory of "reconciling contradictions", and we all remember where that ended. . . .

D.W.

NOTES & TOPICS

European Diary

Bootleg Knowledge

By Jean-François Revel



Paris

THE LAWS of “intellectual development in the child” have never before been the object of so much serious study as they have received in our own time, in particular from the late Jean Piaget. Nor have the secrets of infant and adolescent sensibility ever been so thoroughly explored as they have been since the birth of psychoanalysis. And yet never has pedagogy been so unsure of itself—and teaching so dismally ineffective.

Or so they say. But is this contemporary commonplace true or false? Perhaps it is every generation’s illusion that education was so much sounder in the good old days. Certainly adults too readily forget the negative side of old-time schooling, and all the sheer nonsense it purveyed in literature and biology, in history and philosophy. In my own schooldays, for instance, geography textbooks stated that there were four Races of Man, one of them a “*race rouge*”, even though by then the foundations of modern anthropology were fairly well established. There is also a tendency for people to forget the mechanisation of learning by rote, the old-style punitive methods of transmitting knowledge, and the stifling of all personal judgment. Of course, the opposite could happen too—so much depended on the individual teacher. The old schooling surely had virtues as extensive as its defects. But it did fulfil one essential precondition, one minor detail which is necessary in order for there to be virtues and vices at all: I mean to say that it did, after all, exist.

Can the same be said for the schooling of our own time? That question is being widely asked, and not only in France.

A number of explanations are put forward for the deterioration in primary and secondary education which is commonly agreed in the West to have occurred. One such explanation points to the major

change involved with the fact that, thanks to Television, the teacher is no longer the sole source of knowledge for the child. But was he ever? Precisely because the recipients of secondary education nearly all used to come from more or less middle-class backgrounds, these frequently contained the wherewithal to complement or bypass what the school offered—conversation, books, newspapers, travel, household bric-à-brac and so on. Furthermore, learning does not mean passively imbibing information; what it means above all is being capable of using it. It does not mean just listening to *le sujet du cours*, but being able to take active hold of the subject, so as to be able to give an account of it, compose a text or solve a problem. No amount of watching TV will lead to that.

Another explanation points to the state of confusion among educators, who, striving with a “perpetually evolving” body of knowledge, have lost the healthy certainties of yesteryear, the fixed capital of notions and values which they passed on with joyous self-confidence to our parents and grandparents. Can this ramshackle old story really stand up to a moment’s consideration? The 19th century revolutionised thought quite as much as our own has done. So, indeed, has every century from the 16th onward. Heliocentrism, the rotation of the Earth, the Evolution of species, Psychoanalysis, Einsteinian relativity, the discovery of the structure of the Atom and of the laws of Heredity—each of these were quite as “traumatic” for the state of knowledge in their own time as anything we have seen since 1950. In the realm of technological progress an individual who lived between 1850 and 1920 had to familiarise himself successively, simultaneously, with the appearance or general dissemination of railways, the telegraph, photography, steam navigation, electricity, the gramophone, the telephone, the automobile, the cinema, the aeroplane, the submarine, radio, and much else. He would not seem to have undergone many fewer “future shocks” than a man born, say, in 1930.

As for the arts and literature, the century 1850–1950 was as “revolutionary” as the present period; perhaps even more so. The theory which holds that the Crisis in Education has been caused by our career from an intellectually stable period into a widely disturbed one is not really very convincing.

THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE appears to be located in the interaction between a worthy advance and a gross misconception. The advance is the relative democratisation of education. In France in 1939 there were 26,953 students who passed the *baccalauréat*; in 1955 there were 41,433; and in 1980 there were 233,276. There were 78,973 students at French universities in 1939—157,489

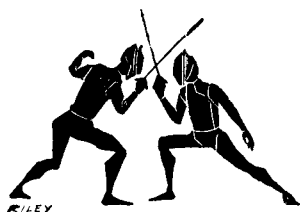
in 1955—and 852,000 (including 108,000 from abroad) in 1980. In the circumstances it was obviously inevitable that there should be a certain lowering of standards among both teachers and students.

But the misconception was to transfigure this drawback into an ideal, and in the spurious guise of some pedagogic revolution to baptise a regrettable deterioration of quality as a desirable liberalisation of methods. It is as if the doctors had announced that since every citizen can now receive medical treatment, thanks to social welfare, it is natural for a greater proportion of patients to die. The old kind of schooling was élitist from the social viewpoint but demanding selective on the academic level: it expected to produce good results, and exams were no comfortable ride. Now the main effect of democratisation has been to make education tremendously easier. Should we now react against this ineluctable first consequence and attempt to reconcile quality and democracy? Or, on the pretext of avoiding élitism, should we try to prevent good pupils from doing good work?

The second alternative would be all the more damaging because it would consequently reinforce a hidden super-élitism which is already well on the way right now, in France as elsewhere. Since it is quite “reactionary” to consider that certain pupils may be better than others (at some subjects, for reasons not exclusively “financial” and “social”), the good pupils are to be found in the good schools (the list of these *lycées* is unofficial but well known), with access rigorously barred to the rest. Leaving the rest of the herd to wallow in the comforting illusion that good results derive neither from hard work nor from real ability, these good pupils get on with their proper studies, and keep as quiet as they can. This is, I am afraid, bootleg knowledge, *le savoir au noir*. In education, as everywhere else, demagoguery is always reactionary.

The Lost Arts of Diplomacy

Paris



IS IT CORRECT to say that *Détente* came to an end in 1980? It would surely be more accurate having recognised that the so-called period of *Détente*—roughly 1970–80—was the golden age of Soviet expansionism, to say that *Détente* never got off the ground. What did come to an end, therefore, is the faith that the West had in a

word a way of interpreting events which flew in the face of all the evidence. What is new is that to deny the obvious has ceased to be credible.

Until the beginning of 1980 Western leaders and commentators were, for the most part, stuck in a false dilemma: either *Détente* or *Cold War*; or, worse still, the “Third World War.” Even now observers still contend that *Détente* was perhaps not a triumphant success, but at least it prevented the outbreak of World War III. Do those who maintain this realise that they are, as I see it, falling right into the trap laid by Soviet propaganda? For to convince the West that if it gave way on all individual issues general conflict would be avoided was the *tour de force* of the Kremlin’s diplomacy.

Thanks to this ploy, the USSR has managed to wage war throughout the world. It has thereby managed to achieve many of its global aims at the lowest price. This success is all the greater when we realise that the blackmail of “world war”, a straightforward bluff ten years ago, has now become a real possibility. The balance of strength between the East and the West has altered in favour of the East (George Marchais has been crowing over it at every opportunity during the last year). So the paradox of 1980 was that the West has lost its illusions about the Soviets’ desire for peace precisely at the moment when it was in the worst position to benefit from its new-found insight.

IT IS INTRIGUING to note that the West has behaved for ten years pretty much as the French and the British behaved towards Hitler from 1935 to 1939. At first they made concessions to the dictator in order to prevent a general war which the Germans did not have the means to initiate, and then stood firm against him from a position of relative weakness. The difference between that period and our own is that the USSR is not aiming to annex Western Europe but to subordinate it. When we say “in the interests of peace, we will give in to the Russians” we are dancing to the tune they composed especially for us (and the dancer who had been keeping in step the best was, in my view, the Federal Republic of Germany).

Fortunately, today this trend is now being reversed. *Détente* in the sense of unilateral Western docility is no longer a sacred dogma. Even the most gullible had their eyes opened by the Soviets’ display of bad faith at the Madrid conference “on Security and Cooperation in Europe.” As usual the best teachers of anti-Sovietism were the Soviets themselves.

YET ANOTHER POLITICAL MYTH collapsed in 1980—the myth of the non-aligned nations. Truly non-aligned countries have vanished or have become paralysed within the movement while the

West, yet again, is seeking to placate the Soviet pawns instead of giving support to the last of the independents. France, somewhat sleepily resting on its laurels after the initiative of Kolwezi, was not able in Black Africa to offer any resistance to Gaddafi, acting as a sub-contractor for the USSR. Together with Fidel Castro, the Libyan colonel showed the Russians how to set about creating war and civil strife in the Third World. Even before the death of its founding father, Tito, the non-aligned movement had already become a kind of multinational of war mongers, fomenting violence... among the non-aligned. The fact that Fidel Castro, the *condottiere* of the Soviet Union, is its president is one of the more ludicrous diplomatic farces of the day. It will only be capped at the next Non-aligned Conference—for it is due to take place in mid-1982 in Iraq, a non-aligned country at war with another non-aligned country, Iran, itself the neighbour of another non-aligned country, Afghanistan, itself repressively occupied by the Red Army.

NOW THAT THE ILLUSIONS of the Europeans have been lost, what should be the next line of resistance in their foreign policy? This seems to me to be obvious: it is a question of modernising the forces of the Atlantic Alliance, with those famous medium-range rockets which are to counterbalance

similar Soviet rockets pointed at Western Europe. NATO's defence must also be strengthened to bring it into line with the capabilities of the Warsaw Pact. It is on this last point that the Kremlin has been, for the last year, waging the most ferocious campaign of intimidation and pressure that we have seen for a long time on Western governments; and it is here that European strength and independence will be put to the test; it is to this point that our diplomacy must be alerted.

But do we still have diplomacy? The real lesson of the recent period is, I fear, that we do not and that it is an art which must be reinvented. All that we have retained is the blandness, as though the ultimate aim of the suave negotiator's technique is not to spoil the mood of one's opposite number. This is, no doubt, a worthwhile aim, but on condition that one's own interests are protected. The art of diplomatic negotiation has always consisted in obtaining slightly more from one's interlocutor than is freely granted (or at least as much). This side of the craft has, it seems, been completely forgotten in the West, at least when the interlocutor is Soviet. My wish for the 1980s is that we start again to learn to teach ourselves lost or forgotten arts in world affairs.

In 1955, a career diplomat, Anatole Muhlstein, reached the following conclusion in a study of the Yalta Conference, the first total capitulation by the West to the Soviet Union:

Master Thinkers

THE WINNING TRIO were: Claude Lévi-Strauss, Raymond Aron, Michel Foucault... the so-called *maîtres penseurs* of contemporary France.

The inquiry was conducted by the Paris magazine "Lire" which put the question to some "representative cross-section" of 600 Frenchmen.

"Which three French intellectuals now living seem to you to have exercised, in their profundity, the greatest influence on the history of ideas, literature, the arts and sciences...?"

Something like a thousand names were supplied on a list.

The leading results were as follows:

- 101—Claude Lévi-Strauss
- 84—Raymond Aron
- 83—Michel Foucault
- 51—Jacques Lacan
- 46—Simone de Beauvoir
- 32—Marguerite Yourcenar
- 27—Fernand Braudel

Some thirty-five others followed with 10 to 24 votes.

ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE IDEA is questionable and the voting technique problematical, the result does seem to reflect rather accurately the opinions of the Paris

intelligentsia in the year 1981. The traditional predominance of the University appears to be permanent, as with Literature and the "sciences humaines." Significant that each of the first three choices belongs to the academic holy of holies, the "Collège de France." Overlooked completely was Louis de Broglie (still alive, if retired), the Nobel Prize-winner who developed a revolutionary theory of the wave nature of electrons. Only one political figure was mentioned in the tables of honour: the African statesman and poet (in French), Leopold Senghor.

One other constant trend: the condescending attitude to the press. Even though the criteria of choice suggested less talent (or genius) than influence, not a single journalist or editor was named. Even Hubert Beuve-Méry, who has been accused over many decades of having directed the movement of French public opinion with his leading articles in "Le Monde", failed to find a place. For the intellectual class, with its corporatism and conformism, to have anything to do with running a newspaper is almost a total disqualifier. One striking change of the times: the retreat of the Marxists and Communists. Only three places in the top 42, and they went to Louis Aragon, Louis Althusser, and Pierre Bourdieu.

Think of what the score would have been twenty years ago!

L'EXPRESS (Paris)

"The allied democracies had soldiers, economists, scientists, orators, but no longer any diplomats. The decline of diplomacy is, in fact,

the main reason for all Europe's troubles. . . ."
I don't think a word of that needs to be changed.

J.-F.R.

London Commentary

The Irish Question, & the Only Solution

The Army "in between"—By EDWARD PEARCE



A LETTER appeared not long ago in the newspaper for which I work, the *Daily Telegraph* of London. It came from a Mr Anthony Lea writing from New York, and it concerned Ulster.

Was there no one in Britain, asked Mr Lea, with the will to apply some sense to the situation? Mrs Thatcher showed

"absolutely no compassion for or even interest in the 1.5 million Catholics she is supposed to be governing in Ulster, and thus herself brings about the tragic acts of desperation such as caused the tragic deaths of five British soldiers on 19 May. . . ."

The Government [continued Mr Lea] has the power (and the responsibility) to make accommodations or even to leave if necessary as they did in India, Kenya and Rhodesia; but to continue relentlessly trying to rule by the sword will surely fail in the long run and disgraces our great country in the eyes of the world in the meantime."

As for Mrs Thatcher, she "makes no effort sensitively to investigate the problem. She hardly shows common courtesy to Mr Haughey and other world figures who would discuss the problem with her in search for a solution."

I quote Mr Lea *in extenso*, not only for the majesty of his two-handed grasp of fallacy but because he exemplifies a view of Northern Ireland miasmally perceived not only by the New York *Daily News* (which has admitted the publication of sensational but quite invented stories about the subject) but by serious newspapers in the US, many of which perceive the central fault as lying with "the

Brits." We British take a lot of flak, the expression "Brits" being not the least of it; being a mild and temperate or, if you like, a dozy and apathetic people, we do not answer back very effectively or with much force. Perhaps the time has come to be less phlegmatic and to turn in anger upon the ignorant, vicious, pharisaical moralisers who, understanding nothing, instruct us as to everything.

NORTHERN IRELAND is geographically part of the island of Ireland, and politically part of the United Kingdom; and there is a two to one majority of Protestants there rejecting any connection with the Irish Republic. There exists within the province and within the Republic an organisation, the Irish Republican Army, which murders people. When they are convicted of such murders they are not hanged (Britain being ruled, irrespective of party, by men of good conscience and tender stomach). They are imprisoned at a jail called "The Maze" in sections shaped like the letter "H." These are certainly among the best-equipped, most comfortable prison accommodation in all of Western Europe. It is doubtful if we treat our mentally sick or our old folk to accommodation of the hotel quality afforded to those who have in cold blood sent innocent people to an early grave.

The IRA's response was to seek "political status" for their men as "prisoners-of-war." When this was denied them they staged a protest and became for their Irish and American public "the boys on the blanket." In fact, they were refusing the lavatory facilities which the repressive colonial power had provided for them, and that part of their excrement which they had not daubed around their walls they sat in. The tender-hearted oppressor, anxious that they should not in consequence contract typhus, moved in large ungainly machines for the regular steam-cleaning of walls brown with faecal protest. Those machines perhaps symbolise

the role of the British Army in Northern Ireland: peaceful, cleansing, beneficent and endlessly frustrated.

Having failed to get anyone hanged or even to contract typhus, the IRA set about instructing relays of its members to starve themselves to death. They might have been forcibly fed (and we should have had protests from Mr Jimmy Breslin's New York column about *that*). But the Government agreed with its Labour predecessor that forcible feeding was illiberal, and contented itself with making food available at all times and urging the men not to do away with themselves.

On the matter of concessions—"political status", "free association" and so on—Mrs Thatcher, who has been at her brave best throughout this episode, declined for two clear reasons. Firstly, gunmen who shoot fathers in front of their children for having the wrong religious denomination in the wrong Irish district are not detained for "political protest"; they are in prison for the wicked crime of murder. Secondly, "political status" was once granted, in the mid-1970s. The privileges were used for classes in the use of the Thompson sub-machine gun, and in the assembly of the mercury-trembler timing device (used in the bomb with which Mr Airey Neave, MP, was murdered). Classes were also given on "propaganda, the use of slogans, rumours, and the international press."

Propaganda is something the IRA have been blessed with from sources where one might once have not expected it. We had recently from the BBC a series on Irish history going back to the mists and Finn MacCool, which at a time of utmost sensitivity dredged its way through "the sorrows of Ireland"—Strongbow, Cromwell, the works. It was put vividly by a left-wing lady of some quality, Janey Buchan:

"The Celtic People, and that includes us Scots, should realise that we are very long on memory and very short on logic."

Did it never occur to the BBC that a long, week-by-week simmer in antique grievances may have done something to the terrorists' morale and probably led to the death of British soldiers and border Protestants? Meddlers are armed in vanity against the consequences of their actions.

And, of course, what is a British soldier to the BBC? Murders are so habitual, so routine, that they rate eighth or ninth item on news bulletins. "Last night in Belfast another soldier. . . ." There is no deliberate malice in this low grading, only habituation to evil. Yet when Robert Sands, on instruction from his superiors, was dying by his own hand, our bulletins were swept clear to give exclusive coverage to the suicide of this gun-porter. It is not only the foreign media which get their priorities crashingly wrong.

At the time of writing there have been four deaths-by-suicide, one allegedly guided through a period of doubt by the prisoner's brother, a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. In that same time there have been 32 IRA murders. Repeat: 32. Who knows anything about the victims—who they were, what sort of lives were terminated?

Mrs Joanna Mathers was the mother of two children, a respectable decent woman who acted as an enumerator in the recent census, apparently a crime. She was shot dead. Sir Norman Stronge was an amiable, very elderly squire who had been Speaker of the dissolved Stormont Parliament. Politically a Unionist (though a mild one), he and his son James were shot and their house burned to the ground for living (as their family had for 350 years) in part-Catholic Armagh; he was 85 years old. Paul Bulman was 20, a responsible young soldier well thought of by his commanding officer, with a family to mourn for him in North Shields, Northumberland. He was killed by an IRA mine. Mr Eric Guiney was a milkman and by religion a Protestant. His son, Desmond, who was helping him with his round, had shown some early talent as a horseman and had the ambition to become a jockey. They were stoned to death.

AND THE FAMED IRA, which provides the suicides after which Roman Catholic clergymen and black-masked firing parties officiate at joint funerals, what exactly is it? Despite the Marxist elements it contains, one could with perfect truth describe the IRA as a fascist organisation, perhaps as the most effective Fascist Party in Europe. By comparison the Italian *MSI* seems humanistic, almost enlightened, and broadly liberal.

They dress the part: hoods, black masks, smoked glasses, ubiquitous guns not for ornamental purposes. They are drenched, like Patrick Pearse, in the vocabulary of blood, race, and tribe. Their contempt for electoral parliamentary politics—including those of the Irish Republic—is limitless. Their view of Prime Minister Charles Haughey, for all the fingers he has dipped in their stream, is rather like Hitler's opinion of Pierre Laval, "a dirty democratic politician." They flourish at all levels by ferocious intimidation, and here perhaps the comparison with "fascism" breaks down. For where Mussolini resorted to doses of castor oil, the IRA punishes those whom it does not liquidate by drilling them through the knee cap with a Black & Decker electric drill, a feat done times beyond counting in the last twelve years.

And, to be sure, they murder people. I have quoted some names which will not be written down in a verse, will not be incorporated into ballads and sheet music as is happening to the Maze suicides like Sands and Francis Hughes. Paul Bulman, the

Guineys, the Stronges, Joanna Mathers—does any part of the press make their names precious? They are the broken stones making up the road along which this dark army means to march to power. Who was there to instruct *their* families and friends during privileged periods of free association, approved by the Home Secretary, in “propaganda, the use of slogans, rumours, and the International Press”?

THE H-BLOCK SUICIDES are international news, and are proof to some of British inhumanity. Alas, the only inhumanity which is in evidence is the near-inhuman patience of the British Army. That army is astonishing. It is now, for all its want of equipment, the most professional army of Western Europe. So far from “living by the sword”, its soldiers live by the plastic bullet and the riot shield.

The British Army is standing between two tribes of people who hate each other, and it is incurring sacrifices in order to keep them from each other's throats. Those who talk about “withdrawal” should reflect that in respect of the IRA (which wishes to rule all Ireland), the Dublin Government (which does not so wish), and the Northern Protestants (able and willing to do their own shooting), there is the prospect of a three-sided civil war of worse than Lebanese proportions. We have seen every kind of vileness and tragedy in Ulster in the last twelve years, but we have seen nothing yet. The small Irish Army could not cope as British soldiers do, but if past form is anything to go by its masters will be far more ruthless and far more willing to conduct a fighting, killing war than liberal, world-opinion-monitoring Britain. And they may have a point. Who would win and which countries would offer services as “sponsors” (as in the Lebanon) are questions not faced because they are too frightening. Even El Salvador might become a model.

WE SHOULD, say the critics, have shown “more flexibility” and “initiative” in seeking political solutions. Apart from the fact that there are no real political solutions, only winners and losers, the one great mistake of this Government's Northern Irish policy was precisely an initiative—talks at Dublin Castle, much murmuring about an “Irish dimension”, all twisted into electoral mileage by Mr Haughey. In natural consequence there was angry distrust among the Protestants and a belief in the IRA that “one more push” would give them what they wanted from a Britain they believed to be weakening. It destabilised.

Hence the hunger strikes and the propaganda campaign. For revolution needs the blood of

martyrs, and since the British denied them, falling back behind shields and warning fire, the IRA erected its very own gallows and ordered its own men to the scaffold. For the want of an authentic Connolly or MacBride “a terrible beauty” would have to be fabricated, like some good story in the *Daily News*.

As a consequence things are much worse. “Initiatives” have that sort of effect. At least in areas of high tension like the Border and West Belfast the IRA has won sympathy and votes, something it normally derides. Shortly before his death, Robert Sands was elected to Westminster for Fermanagh in place of a deceased Republican. A moderate Catholic candidate, Austin Currie, was intimidated into not standing. Worse, in the local government elections, that admirable man in Ulster politics, Gerry Fitt, was unable to make bottom qualifying place in a poll he habitually tops. His friend and ally, Paddy Devlin, was not only defeated but finally driven out of the Catholic area where he (a Catholic) lived, by ugly threats to the lives of his family.

Gerry Fitt (who is also MP for West Belfast) and Paddy Devlin are men of some nobility. They have fought long political lives against the injustices to the Catholics done by the Stormont autonomous Government. But unlike their former colleagues in the catch-all Catholic grouping of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, they are uncompromised with IRA contacts and ambiguities, and they are categorical enemies of every kind of violence. They have almost learned to live with vicious personal menace, and they have been very nearly destroyed politically. A stand against murder is not wanted. The sneaking, casuistical accommodation of it practised by the SDLP and the clergy is wanted. Catholic and Socialist politicians of conscience who at great risk to themselves attacked violence, with a want of equivocation which the Cardinal of Armagh never has, have been thrown out. Something must be very sick indeed in the community which rejects such people.

Correspondingly, among the Protestants the ranting Mr Ian Paisley grows great in the polls, and the tough but just James Molyneux is weakened. Please, no more “initiatives.” And while we are about it, no more world opinion.

Only one policy is possible in Ulster: the provision of administration; the keeping of the Queen's Peace by the Army (the only force that can stop a real civil war); and certainty. Boring old Britain has to break the hearts of the gangsters by the assurance that plodding, footsore, perhaps over-restricted soldiers will continue to stand between the Irish and their terrible historic selves.

Expect nothing, wait upon nothing, hope for nothing—leaving certain Dublin politicians to play

the soiled politics they understand. Only governance, policing, and certainty can do good. There is no political solution. The British Army, which

surely deserves a prize for peace for what it does, is entitled to say, "We are the only solution you have."

On the Death of a Friend

Romain Gary—By FRANÇOIS BONDY

Zurich

A FEW MONTHS AGO my friend Romain Gary killed himself. He left behind a last note, written in his almost childish handwriting which, as I know from the days when we were classmates in the same French *lycée*, had scarcely changed over the long years: the same tiny script in which he wrote, never altering a stroke, his fifteen or twenty books, of which the best were not the most successful, and the easiest became best-sellers and famous films, all (with possibly one exception) unflinching less than good. In one film which he himself had produced and directed, the leading role was played by a Hollywood star who happened to be his wife. A few months before his own suicide she was found dead in a car, parked in a Paris side-street to which, in view of the pills and drugs she had taken, she could not have driven alone. For my own part I do not believe that Jean Seberg's death, or the macabre circumstances accompanying the police inquiry and the autopsy, provides any kind of key to Romain Gary's final decision. He himself put the point vigorously in his last letter. They had long been separated. "I used to be her husband, then I became her father..." he said of the tragic American girl who was some twenty-five years his junior. Naturally the boulevard press in a half-dozen European capitals, not to mention the gossip

columnists in Manhattan, all had special versions of their own.

Romain Gary was not only an enthralling storyteller, marked by the humour of his Slavic-Jewish background (which the French found so agreeably alien), but a man of adventure, spectacular as a fighter-pilot or diplomat or roving reporter; and he would hardly have been surprised at the fictional publicity.

In Bern, as I remember, when he was a French attaché, he was living with his first wife, the English novelist Lesley Blanch, who was somewhat older than he. She taught him to write in English, in a rather elegant prose-style of his own, and a number of these novels (such as *Lady L.*) he later translated into French. I know at least two thrillers of his which he penned under a pseudonym, and I suspect there were others. Who knows what a full bibliography of his writings would look like? He had a weakness for literary hoaxes, and in one case actually republished an early novel under a new title. Only last summer in Zurich he dug out for me a sheaf of notices, and not a single reviewer had spotted the "revival." Had he simply fooled his readers, or was the novel that forgettable? We were friends and I repressed the question.

For me Romain Gary was so fascinating an entertainer that I always felt it irrelevant or out of place to venture the critical question about literary quality. Some of his novels are obviously very close to his own personal adventures; others take place in German-occupied Poland among partisans and refugees, or in Vichy France among youth gangs; and although he was at the time either in London or in Africa, these were among his strongest pieces of fiction.

IN its obituary columns (4 December 1980), "The Times" wrote: "M. Romain Gary, who took his life on Dec. 2, at his Paris flat, was one of the revivers of the romantic novel in the Russian tradition. He was 66. In the words of M. Maurice Schumann of the French Academy, he was a hero after the manner of Dostoevsky and Joseph Kessel. . . . He used to say of himself: 'I have not a drop of French blood, but France runs in my veins.' He was one of the first to join General de Gaulle in London: 'My relations with him were very difficult, and of my dozen meetings with him he threw me out of his office four or five times. He rather liked my cheek.' . . . His best known novels included 'Les Racines du Ciel' which won him the Goncourt Prize in 1956 and was later filmed. The highly successful 'Lady L.' was also adapted for the screen, by Peter Ustinov, with Sophia Loren in the title role. . . ."

THE DAY AFTER his death had been reported in the newspapers came a telephone call from a popular illustrated Paris weekly. As an old friend I was supposed to explain, to tell the whole story, to reveal it all. How could I? A reporter flew down to see me anyway, stayed overnight, and grumbled only when he left, "Didn't get much out of you, you know. . . ." They expected more since one of his

books, a kind of autobiographical novel, consists of a dialogue between the two of us. But this too was a joke, a trick, a hoax if you will. The manuscript of the book was quite complete when he gave it to me and suggested only that I insert some questions and remarks of my own in order to fill it out. (Perhaps he had been inspired by a story I once told him of how that fine writer, Witold Gombrowicz, had composed an autobiography and pretended that it was a French interview, although he had written it in Polish and in the English version the interviewer simply disappeared....) Original texts are not always reliable primary sources.

I once asked him for a short story, and I published it in the Paris monthly review I was editing at the time. Called "Sunshine", it was the tale of a German Jew whose business manager had taken over his company ("Aryanised" it, as it was termed) and in whose cellar he remained hidden from the police. In the hopeless darkness he thought of Goethe and Schiller and whether old German humanist values could ever be saved. Years went by. His loyal protector came down and told him, every now and then, how the War was progressing. All sense of time is lost, and the reader soon suspects that peace had long since broken out but that the man in the cellar didn't know it, would never know it.

Romain had something of the passion and persistence of a tribal bard, and he once compared himself to a gypsy violinist. I have known a few others, with Eastern talents married to Western experience: Gregor von Rezzori, for example, who also moves from heights to depths and, when he rises again, flies better than most would give him credit for. But they win only notoriety and have only themselves to blame.

ROMAIN GARY was one of that type of man who, as they age, like to put on different faces, showing themselves with beard, and then only mustachios, and finally clean-shaven again. He was obsessed with himself. I once accompanied him in Zurich when he went shopping for an expensive fountain pen; he must have tried his hand at a dozen, testing them all, writing his own name again and again. He was an observer of sharpness and exactitude, felt things intuitively, worried about his friends and couldn't simply stand by when they were ill or troubled. One of our former schoolmates became despondent after a divorce, and Romain set about finding him another wife, arranging for their marriage in Geneva where they were presumably to live happily ever after.

Every once in a while he would call me up, and suddenly ask, without preamble or explanation, "Did you ever really understand?..."

"No", I would answer, "I didn't either..." Whereupon he would hang up, apparently satisfied.

This, I take it, was his aching sense of the meaninglessness of things, of floating in unreality, and it must in the end have overpowered him. He had just taken a holiday with his son in Greece; friends reported they had seen him, the night before, in Saint-Germain-des-Prés. With what insight I know not but his son said that he "understood" his father's suicide, talking to that curious reporter to whom I could find nothing to say. I never found out what that understanding was. My friendship and my incomprehension belonged together for most of a lifetime.

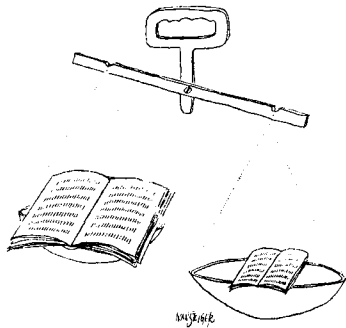
Strange that his readers should have been so demonstrably moved to hope, to take up dedicated causes, to side so sympathetically with the author. I still get an occasional call from one of his oldest and most loyal fans. She never met him but remains convinced that they somehow shared a love, that she could have mothered him, that she might have been the only woman in his life, that he was the one man she would have given anything to know. Taken together, her confidences to me, as an "old friend", tell the whole story of her life, marriage, affairs, career. I doubt whether I really know more about anybody than this character straight out of a Romain Gary story. The last time she phoned she was sobbing and couldn't go on:

That was the moment when I at least understood one thing: why he was constantly changing his address or his telephone number, and why it seemed such a privilege to know where he lived and how he could be reached. It took me out of my benumbed sadness and raised the query how an author could so dominate a reader, and not necessarily by means of the finest literary techniques. What novels, after all, did Emma Bovary read? I mused over the kind of tale Romain Gary might have been inspired to write about this posthumous incident, and was even tempted to put pen to paper myself. Then I happened to recall that in one of his novels he tried to renew the old legend of "the Dybbuk": a tale of how a Jewish victim creeps into the soul of a German policeman.... My old friend must not become my own Dybbuk.

THE MAN was something of a hero, a fabulist, a high-flyer, a showman. He thought of himself as "a lyrical clown", or sometimes as "a terrorist of humour." He tried to combine slapstick with sentiment, to mix a vision of real horrors with comic grotesqueries. Am I, with these feeble attempts at characterisation, only trying to protect my soul from his persistent influence? It could be that I am yet again failing to understand, to comprehend what it was in the mind of my oldest friend that led him to lie down on his sofa and fire a bullet into his forehead.

Can Economists Learn?

By Eric Roll



London

THE EDITORS of *The Public Interest* are to be congratulated on having chosen, as a special fifteenth anniversary issue, a symposium on "The Crisis in Economic Theory."¹ It is debatable, how-

ever, whether they are right in supposing that all discussions of economic policy "end up in controversies over economic theory" rather than the other way around.

This is a formidable collection, with twelve articles grouped in four sections ("Economic Theory and Policy in Disarray", "Reconceiving Economic Man", a re-examination of "General Equilibrium", and "The Radical Critique"), and an "Epilogue" by one of the journal's editors, Irving Kristol. The authors are distinguished in their fields. Important economic theorists are headed by Nobel Prize-winner Kenneth Arrow, and include Paul Davidson (an editor of the *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics*), Frank Hahn, James Dean, Allan Meltzer, Israel Kirzner, Harvey Leibenstein, and Edward Nell. They are accompanied by writers who are experienced either in Management Economics or in the more practical fields of finance—Peter Drucker, Mark Willes (a former President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis)—and finally by social scientists of a more general stamp—the Editors, Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell.

LORD ROLL is the author of, among other works, a widely used academic textbook, *"A History of Economic Thought"* (1954, n.e. 1973). He was Director of the Bank of England from 1968–74, and was in the 1960s a senior official in the British Government, concerned among other things with the entry of the UK into the Common Market. He is at present chairman of the London firm of merchant bankers, S. G. Warburg & Co., and Chancellor of the University of Southampton. He contributed an article to the July 1978 issue of *ENCOUNTER* entitled "Has Economics a Future?"

Before analysing what emerges from this very varied survey (which is, however, inspired by common preoccupations) and discussing the general thesis, let me give a summary of the individual contributions, grouped somewhat differently from the way in which they are presented. It is best to start with James Dean's excellent brief survey of the "Dissolution of the Keynesian Consensus", for his account of the breakdown of the pre-eminence of Keynesian theory and the policies based upon it (whether one accepts or not his classification of "revolutionary", "evolutionary", and "reactionary" responses) clearly demonstrates that it is inadequacy in coping with changes in the real economy that discredits a particular type of economic policy and then leads to a re-examination of its foundations in economic theory.

Allan Meltzer follows with a brief account of the monetarist reaction. He, as is common among monetarists, has no doubts: there were major policy failures (not clearly specified) in the 1960s and '70s, and "economists trained in the heyday of Keynesian economics were responsible." Hence the important "new" verities: Milton Friedman in 1967 (there is no "trade-off" between employment and inflation) and Karl Brunner in 1968 ("monetary impulses are a major factor accounting for variations in output, employment and prices"; movements in the money stock measure the thrust of monetary impulses; and movements of the money stock are dominated by the behaviour of the monetary authorities). Here is the quintessence of Monetarism. Meltzer ends on a curiously indeterminate note: policies have failed because "there is a large gap between economic theory and policy."

THERE FOLLOWS a different critique of Keynesian economics: Mark Willes' exposition of the "rational expectation" school, nowadays referred by the unlovely abbreviation of "Ratex." This new school, according to Willes, merely applies classical economics to macroeconomic policy-making: the basic two principles are that individuals "optimise" and that markets clear. However, macroeconomic models of recent years have incorporated so-called "adaptive expectations"—expectations based on the assumption that the future will essentially be a continuation of the past. But since change cannot be avoided, "adaptive" expectations are essentially irrational. Individuals are not irrational, hence different expectations ("rational expectations") must be introduced. Both Keynesian and monetarist

¹ *The Public Interest, Special Issue, 1980: The Crisis in Economic Theory*. Edited by DANIEL BELL and IRVING KRISTOL. *The Public Interest* (Box 542, Old Chelsea, New York, N.Y. 1011, USA), \$4.00.

models, the "Ratex" school argues, are vitiated by this failure to allow for changes in the reactions of individuals, since individuals do, however inadequately, take into account changes in policy.

The "Ratex" school is opposed to activist economic policies. Their first reason is that the existing models which serve as the basis for macro-economic policies cannot "succeed in offsetting the normal fluctuations in output, employment or other aggregates." ("Normal" is here equated with "the business cycle"—which is not further defined.) The effects of activist policies are bound to be uncertain: policies, therefore, tend in practice to be "massive." Even if the results were known, we would not know whether these were desirable. Thus "stable" rather than "activist" policies are needed.

Government should set "the rules of the game" on the basis of improving the general welfare—how this is to be defined, or what rules of the games would promote it (other than "stable" rules), is not stated.

ANOTHER WAY OF "re-conceiving economic man" is presented by Harvey Leibenstein in the "X-efficiency theory." It is difficult from his short article to make out quite what this theory amounts to. It questions two of the main postulates of micro-economics: (1) maximisation of profits or, more important, minimisation of costs for a given output; and (2) the production function. The theory argues that minimisation of costs is the exception rather than the rule; increases in input prices may not produce increases in output costs; and raising the price of the product may increase cost. In general, this school appears to resemble the "Ratex" school—if it can be satisfactorily developed (for which there is as yet not a great deal of evidence) to become a plea for a more varied series of models rather than a wholesale rejection of classical or neo-classical economics. But it does not seem to offer a particularly fruitful contribution to the controversy over the general direction of macro-economic theory and the policy to which it should lead.

UNDER THE HEADING of "General Equilibrium and Beyond" comes, first, a restatement of the "Austrian" school by Israel Kirzner, though with perhaps less emphasis on the monetarist ingredient than is nowadays associated with that school. Secondly, a very clear restatement by Frank Hahn of general equilibrium theory with some interesting indications of possible developments away from Walras, combined with a restatement of the incompatibility of classical equilibrium and involuntary unemployment and the implications of this for the Keynesian critique. Finally in

this section comes a brief account in somewhat similar vein by Kenneth Arrow, which is also a very clear statement of the implications of disequilibrium, whether caused by monetary disturbances or by other economic fluctuations.

Two further articles claim to state a radical critique. Edward Nell gives us a more or less classic Marxian restatement, though going beyond Marx in the direction of the work of Piero Sraffa. In its basic inspiration, however, it is traditionally Marxist, particularly in the use of such concepts as "alienation", "special labour theory of value", and so on. The crux is in the question the author poses: "How is a better understanding of Marx . . . going to help us understand the economic crisis of our times?" There follows a long list of today's ills, from "stagflation" to "ill-designed and unmanageable cities", and the further question of what value and capital have to do with them. The answer which Nell briefly gives relies not so much on the sophisticated, not to say abstruse, arguments about the Labour Theory of Value, but rather on the philosophical fundamentals of Marxism: "contradiction" (e.g., between Capital and Labour) as the mainspring of historical development; economics cannot be isolated from politics; capital is not a factor of production, but a social relationship; "productivity and technical change have social and political dimensions" (older Marxists would have said "epiphenomena"); and markets must be viewed according to the social relationships in which the parties in them stand to each other.

FINALLY, Paul Davidson, whose contribution is—perhaps debatably—also included in the section on "The Radical Critique", provides a clear exposition of what has come to be known as "post-Keynesian economics." He begins with the assertion that what is popularly regarded as the Keynesianism which gained ascendancy in the 1950s and '60s was no more than the neo-classical framework to which some Keynesian macro-terminology had been added, and while retaining some of Keynes's specific policy recommendations, discarded (perhaps more accurately, did not develop) the essential logic of Keynes's theory. This rests on three propositions: (1) the economy is a historical process; (2) uncertainty is unavoidable, therefore expectations have a significant effect on the economy; and (3) economic and political institutions play an important part in determining economic events. On these bases, Davidson proceeds to show (as Keynes had shown and as, more recently, Kenneth Arrow and Frank Hahn have demonstrated) the inadequacy of the traditional general equilibrium analysis, particularly the fact that equilibrium—in the sense of buyers and sellers not departing from a position

reached—does not imply that at that point markets will clear. He rightly emphasises that “Keynes was pre-eminently a monetary economist” (a description to which Keynes is much more entitled than most so-called Monetarists). He then goes on to sum up briefly the importance of liquidity and money (with its negligible elasticities of production and substitution) and of contracts in money terms in an uncertain world, one in which no equilibrium may exist. The most important Keynesian conclusion (contrary to Jean-Baptiste Say or to Milton Friedman) is that economies may settle down to a sort of equilibrium at any level of employment, i.e., they may show unemployment in the long as well as the short term.

I MENTION Daniel Bell’s “Models and Reality in Economic Discourse” and Irving Kristol’s epilogue, “Rationalisation in Economics”, together because both authors are social scientists without being economists, though they have clearly taken a good deal of trouble to keep themselves well-informed on the literature. They also have a not dissimilar outlook. Bell writes in the earlier part of the volume, Kristol at the very end, yet both articles contain a kind of summing-up, and form a suitable pendant to the introductory analysis of the erosion of the sort of theory (Keynesian in one form or another) which dominated the Post-War scene for several decades.

Both writers, not unnaturally, emphasise the need for a more broadly based economics, one that “has to understand its underpinnings not only in relation to politics but to political theory” (Bell). The body “of undisputed theory”—that which is scientific in the neo-classical sense and devoid of speculations of a sociological, political or historical nature—“is shrinking before our very eyes, not growing” (Kristol).

WHAT IS ONE TO MAKE OF this collection of varied diagnoses with only occasional hints as to how prescriptions for curing the disease might be composed?

One must not expect in a series of short articles to find either an exhaustive analysis of the main theme or a full and clear statement of each of the different views: Keynesian, post-Keynesian, Marxist, Monetarist, etc. Furthermore, given the fairly prevalent propensity of economists to indulge in controversies over refinements of doctrine with almost medieval subtlety and stubbornness, one cannot even assume that any one individual author necessarily carries the consent of other members of the school to which he subscribes. One consensus certainly emerges: namely, that there is precious little consensus left. What Bell, in a particularly

brilliant summary of what went into its creation, calls “the golden age” of economics (1947–1973) is now over!

This conclusion could hardly be disputed by any of the authors and gives rise to a number of questions. Why should this be so? What is the way out of the current “impasse”? Do the more radical proposals offer any real prospect of a new, more realistic and more fruitful development?

The answer to the last question, certainly on the evidence here available (excluding Davidson), seems to be negative. “Ratex” and “X-efficiency” may eventually have some contribution to make to pure theory, but this is unlikely to be more than partial and would even then require considerable fleshing-out. The claims here made for them in terms of their significance for economic policy seem to me exaggerated, to put it mildly.

As for Marxism, despite Nell’s brave attempt (and, more significantly, despite the brilliant efforts of Sraffa and Joan Robinson), there is no evidence that the pure economics of Marx has shown any capacity for further development in a strictly theoretical sense or any relevance to economic practice and policy, even in those societies professedly Marxist in structure. It is by no means clear how far the philosophical elements in Marxism—which I have always regarded as primary, the economics being largely tacked-on—are useful contributions to the analysis of the present plight of political economy as distinct from economics. Even if one accepted that certain sociological categories, such as “alienation”, have something important to say about modern society, their relevance to the problem of the co-existence of severe unemployment and high inflation is far from obvious.

WHY IS “THE GOLDEN AGE” OVER? Daniel Bell is generous in dating its demise to 1973, for there is evidence that already in the mid- and later ’60s cracks were appearing in the neo-classical Keynesian edifice. The demise of the Bretton Woods monetary system and the subsequent Oil Shock only confirmed the inadequacy of “demand management” and “fine tuning” as then understood and practised.

At this point, one must question the belief that seems to underlie the present survey—that divergencies over economic policy can be traced to disagreements over theory. While I do not believe in a uniform, all-embracing relation between theory and policy, a more valid one for the recent past—and perhaps even for the more distant one—would be something like this. A particular theory develops out of its own past—analytical and dynamic—but takes account also of new developments in the real world (as in Keynes). It comes to be accepted as a “more relevant” abstract of economic reality and a

“more valid” analysis of the problems which that reality poses than what has gone before. A distillate or simplified version of that theory then becomes widely known among policy-makers, opinion-formers, etc., although few of these would be capable of understanding the underlying, more elaborate, theoretical foundation. It then becomes accepted as the basis for economic policy.

The resultant policy cannot but be a simplified, indeed crude, reflection of the original theory, if only because economic policy, in democratic societies, has to be embodied in election manifestos, political slogans, and the like; and these must be simple (at least no one has yet had the courage to try anything complex). It cannot be certain in advance that the responses to stimuli postulated in theory will in fact occur in the prescribed form. Finally, the instruments available to policy-makers, even excluding purely political constraints, are limited and do not necessarily afford the freedom of manoeuvre required if a theory is to be properly tested. For reasons which are occasionally obvious (the Oil Shock) but often quite obscure (the economico-cultural differences between, say, Japan and France on the one side and Britain on the other), policy becomes increasingly inadequate. After a while its theoretical foundations begin to be questioned, normally first by the policy-makers who were so eager to embrace them (by proxy as it were) at the outset.

In the intervening period, particularly when that lasts a long time—almost a quarter-of-a-century as far as the last phase is concerned—the alliance between Theory and Policy, between academics, politicians, and administrators, reaches a high degree of harmony and inevitably leads to complacency—indeed to arrogantly excessive claims for the possibilities of economic management. (The period of economic expansion after the Smith/Ricardo dominance was established—confined though it was to Britain—must have been another such high point.)

Irving Kristol is, therefore, right to speak of a certain *hubris* which must inevitably be followed by a *nemesis*: the low esteem in which yesterday's economics is held and the eagerness with which the economics of the day before yesterday is now being pursued.

Since 1968, soon after I was freed from the con-

straints of officialdom, I have frequently drawn attention to the danger inherent in “macro-economicosis”—the belief that you could read off as on a dial what needs to be “taken out of” or “put into” the economy to achieve stability, growth, and full employment. But it would be a tragedy if the failures of economic policy were to lead to a blind rush for the supposed verities of the pre-Keynesian era or discredit what has been achieved by modern economists, thereby blocking the road to further advance both in theoretical understanding and in greater relevance to problems of policy.

THE MORE EXTREME FORMS of Monetarism and Non-Interventionism which are fashionable today in some quarters, contrary to the claim sometimes made for them that they represent the “hard choices”, respond to a deep-seated urge in the human mind to be exempt from difficult choices, to be presented with an automatic pilot, be it fixed growth of the money supply, or the invisible hand of the pure market economy.

This is not to say that some of the “bed-rock truths of economics” (as Kristol calls them) which derive from the Smithian, liberal tradition should not, in some degree and suitably supplemented, continue to be cherished. But modern economies—and not only the industrialised ones round the North Atlantic—are so complex, and the tasks so ineluctably placed upon the authorities (not central government only) are so exacting, that a further search for suitable policy instruments, diagnostic as well as therapeutic, must remain the economist's major obligation. In this process, the heritage of Keynes will be bound to play a vital part, either in the neo-classical/Keynesian form of Samuelson and Solow, the neo-Keynesian one of Hahn and Arrow, or the post-Keynesian one of Paul Davidson, who has been responsible particularly for important work in the field of money, less sterile than that of the “monetarists.”

The present doubts, self-criticisms, and new interpretations should lead to a greater hesitation on the part of politicians to go overboard on doctrine. I hope too that the rethinking among the world's economists will encourage more modest and less practical claims for their discipline.

BOOKS & WRITERS

Happy Endings

Literature, Misery, & Joy—By HELEN GARDNER

A GREAT MANY YEARS AGO I was in the theatre watching John Gielgud playing Hamlet. He had by this time become the idol of the West End stage, following the sensational success of a rather sentimental historical play, *Richard of Bordeaux*, and the theatre was packed with his admirers who were willing to go and see him in anything. I had behind me two young women who watched what was obviously an unknown play to them with rapt and indeed anguished attention. In the second interval, following Hamlet's despatch to England, one said to the other: "How do you think it is going to end?" Her friend replied: "I don't know; but I'm afraid it's got to end sadly. I'm sure he's got to die."

It seemed to me that the speaker in her simple way had paid a just tribute to Shakespeare as an artist, combining the arousal and the satisfaction of expectation with the pleasures of surprise, giving his audience a sense of direction, which at the close will find fulfilment, along with an ignorance as to the paths by which that close will be reached. "One of Shakespeare's gifts", Ian Donaldson has written,¹ contrasting him here with Congreve, "is his unerring calculation of the extent to which the unsophisticated members of his audience can tolerate narrative surprise." But he rightly added that Coleridge placed first of his "Characteristics of Shakespeare" that his plays encouraged "Expectation in preference to surprise."

*Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end.*

So wrote Byron at the opening of the fourth Canto of *Don Juan*. And indeed it is difficult to imagine that Byron, however long he had lived, would ever have found a true end to *Don Juan*. For a beginning, he had opened by forswearing the "usual

method" of the epic poet, the plunge *in medias res*, in favour of beginning "with the beginning", declaring

The regularity of my design

Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning.

So he begins with Juan's parents, his birth and upbringing. Artistically, this is not a beginning at all, since it arouses no expectation. It is an "open-beginning" on which anything can follow and therefore cannot reach a true end except by some kind of death. *Don Juan* lives by its continual flouting of expectations and is built on the principle of surprise. It is not a mock-epic or a mock-romance: it is an anti-epic or an anti-romance. It is full of epic and romantic material, but it flouts the laws of both epic and romance. Yet a great part of the pleasure it gives lies in its defeat of our natural expectations: that where we look for "And so, and so, and so..." we are given only "And then, and then, and then...". Byron was writing in an age that still believed a poem should have a beginning, middle, and end, and constantly mocks at the desire for consequence: for the movement towards a destined and foreseen end in epic, or for the gradual weaving together of separate strands, the mending of what has been broken, that brings a romance to its proper conclusion.

A more sober writer than Byron, with the novel rather than a poem in mind, George Eliot, echoed him. "Beginnings are always troublesome", she wrote in a letter, "and conclusions are the weak point of most authors." She added that "some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation." She means, I suppose, that in the very act of writing "The End", the novelist negates the movement of time, the continuity of human lives, by an arbitrary act of will.

The plot of *Middlemarch* is neatly rounded off at the close of Book VIII, "Sunset and Sunrise", when the obstacle to the happy ending of the love-story of Fred Vincy and Mary Garth is removed by the

"HAPPY ENDINGS" was delivered as the fourth annual Darwin Lecture at Darwin College, Cambridge. Earlier lectures were given by Ernst Gombrich, Karl Popper and Christian de Duve.

¹ Ian Donaldson, *The World Upside Down* (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 1970).

"amends" the penitent Bulstrode makes at the suggestion of his faithful wife. But George Eliot could not leave it there. She provides a long "Finale", as she calls it, justifying herself by declaring that "Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending", and asking:

"Who can quit young lives after being long in company with them, and not desire to know what befell them in their after-years. . . . Marriage, which has been the bourne of so many narratives, is still a great beginning, as it was to Adam and Eve, who kept their honeymoon in Eden, but had their first little one among the thorns and thistles of the wilderness."

But the end of *Middlemarch* is only moderately happy. We are not asked to believe that Lydgate and Rosamond settle down to some kind of tolerable *modus vivendi*, or that Dorothea's aspirations are fully satisfied by her marriage to Will Ladislaw.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, a more poetic writer than George Eliot, made the same rejection of the true artistic ending of *Jane Eyre* when she was unwilling to stop at "Reader, I married him." This is surely the perfect ending to a story that begins with a dependent orphan child, conscious of her physical inferiority to her bullying cousins, unjustly punished by her aunt, being locked up, alone and terrified, in the red room. But we go on for ten years, with Mr Rochester recovering his sight, at least partially, a proper education for little Adèle, which turns her into a "pleasing and obliging companion: docile, good-tempered and well-principled", happy marriages for Diana and Mary Rivers, and, in keeping with the book's strong religious feeling, the dedicated life of St John Rivers as "Christ's 'good and faithful servant'", expecting his Master's call home.

Thackeray, a more self-conscious artist than either George Eliot or Charlotte Brontë, does the same:

"Here it is [he writes, having at last united Dobbin and Amelia]—the summit, the end—the last page of the third volume. Good-bye, colonel—God bless you, honest William! Farewell, dear Amelia—Grow green again, tender little parasite, round the rugged old oak to which you cling!"

But he too is unwilling to leave the reader without a glimpse into the future, in which he blackens "the famous little Becky puppet" by more than hinting she murdered the wretched Jos, and gives us the sad comment on Dobbin's reward:

"*Vanitas Vanitatum!* Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied? Come children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out."

He thus comes full circle, echoing the prologue to the whole novel, in which he had presented himself as only a puppet master. And he has throughout the long novel manipulated his puppets in full view of the audience in order to manipulate our feelings towards them.

All these extensions beyond the true end reflect an amiable, even affectionate, relation of the writers to their readers, which the classic English novelists of the 18th and 19th centuries derived from their "great exemplar", Shakespeare. They assume they have carried their readers simple as well as sophisticated with them, who will feel, as they do, a certain regret when they close the book, and say goodbye to characters whose fortunes they have been absorbed by for so long. The dramatist has not this licence to go beyond the happy ending to validate its happiness by reference to the future. He must rely on arousing our faith in it.

I OWE MY KNOWLEDGE of the quotation from George Eliot's letters to Frank Kermode's wide-ranging discussion of the concords of ends and beginnings in his lectures on the apocalyptic mode of thinking, published in 1967 as *The Sense of an Ending*.² Summary cannot do justice to the scope and interest of the book; but briefly he is concerned with the relation of our fictions to our concepts of the nature of the world. Kermode sees in the Biblical concept of time as linear—the world having had a beginning, and moving through time to an end, when time will stop—a paradigm for fictions that show a beginning, a middle, and an end in human affairs. The first three lectures culminated in a discussion of Spenser's *Gardens of Adonis*, and his *Mutability Cantos*, and of Shakespearean Tragedy as having arisen in an age when this concept of the world as having a determinate beginning and expected end was crossed by, and existed along with, the concept, deriving from Aristotle mediated by Averroës, of a world that is eternal, without beginning or end.

In his last three lectures, Kermode turned to a discussion of modern fictions and modern poetry, which he saw as arising in a world in which the concept of a beginning or an end to the world has become unimaginable, in which we are simply "in the midst", the notion of apocalypse having been transformed into the notion of perpetual crisis.

"We probably have to accept, though without making too much of it, an historical transition,

² Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford University Press, 1967).

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related to this protraction of time, from a literature which assumed that it was imitating an order to a literature which assumes that it has to create an order, unique and self-dependent, and possibly attainable only after a critical process that might be called 'decreation'."

Or, a transition from a concept of literature as *mimesis*, imitation, to a concept of literature as being something more like mathematics, which satisfies the desires of the human mind by the beauty and elegance of a solution found to a problem posed.

I HAVE NO WISH to undervalue the extreme interest of what Frank Kermode has done in tracing an important way of thinking about the nature of the world in his discussion of the apocalyptic way of thinking; and I am grateful to him for his firm defence of the essential temporality of works of literature in two senses: that all fictions discover their form through movement and change, and that the notion of spatial form is only a metaphor; and that works of art are historically conditioned, belong to a certain time in history. I am grateful to him also for his defence of the imagination's power to satisfy the human need to find a concord between beginnings and ends that bestows, in his fine phrase when speaking of the end of Proust's great novel, "a benefaction of meaning." But I feel doubtful whether the change in our conceptions of the time scale of the universe is sufficient by itself to account for the distrust so widely expressed today in the power of art to present images of human life that strongly engage our sympathies and give pleasure: the pleasure arising both from that concord of ends and beginnings that makes the work a whole and from the truth of what is shown or told to our own experience of living.

The absence of the apocalyptic way of thinking in classical Greece did not prevent Aristotle from conceiving of a work of art as being the imitation of an action with a beginning, middle, and end, or Greek poets and dramatists from exemplifying this. And I do not think the loss or transformation of the apocalyptic mode of thought by the disappearance of the idea of a determinable beginning and a prophesied or foreseen end to the world (relevant as Kermode shows it to be to our understanding of the experimental *nouveau roman* in France and to the poetry of Wallace Stevens) can by itself account for the widespread appearance today of the open-ended play or novel, which opens only on to a dull misery, the vogue of black comedy, the ironical treatment by critics and by theatrical directors of the traditional happy endings of comedy, and the replacement by many of the age-old view that art should give pleasure by the notion that art should disturb.

"ALL TRAGEDIES are finished by a death, / All comedies are ended with a marriage", wrote Byron, adding "The future state of both is left to faith." The first statement is not true of ancient tragedy, where the reversal of fortune could be from bad to good; but it has been generally accepted from the early Middle Ages that a tragedy ends with calamity and usually with death. The apocalyptic mode of thinking plainly has relevance here. Tragic endings have finality. It is true that the world does not come to an end, life goes on; but something has gone forever and we mourn for a greatness irrecoverably destroyed while accepting the necessity of its destruction. The proper pleasure that tragedy gives—and a tragedy is a work of art designed to please—does not lie in the consolation that some used to try to persuade us to find in a general good brought about by the calamity.

It used to be argued by some that the deaths of Romeo and Juliet bring peace to the streets of Verona, and that Capulets and Montagues will no longer bite their thumbs at each other; that Denmark will be efficiently run by the young, vigorous nonentity, Fortinbras; that the virtuous Malcolm, a lawful king, will bring peace and justice to "poor Scotland"; and that Albany and Edgar, who at least we do know a good deal more about, good and pious men, survive to sustain the "gor'd state." It has been pointed out that Octavius is the only character who can say before the final battle

The time of universal peace is near:

Prove this a prosperous day, the three-nook'd world

Can bear the olive freely.

His victory will bring about the blest time when

No war or Battle's sound

Was heard the world around,

The idle spear and shield was high uphung.

But this perspective into the future cannot draw our minds away from the actuality presented, or mitigate our feeling of the enormous "gap in nature" that is left by the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra.

The presence of survivors on the stage at the close of a Shakespearean tragedy is, on purely practical grounds, a necessity in a theatre with no front curtain. Somebody is needed to give the order "Take up the bodies", or to command that the curtains be drawn around the bed on which Othello lies dead above the body of the dead Desdemona: "The object poisons sight: let it be hid." Nobody, to my knowledge, has ever attempted to find any consolation at the close of *Othello* in the prospect of Cassio ruling in Cyprus or of Iago being tortured. I very much doubt whether anybody in the theatre or in reading finds in the presence of survivors at the close of a tragedy any real sense of continuity—that life will go on—and that the end of a tragedy is a new and hopeful beginning.

But this is the very essence of the happy ending of those comedies that end with marriage. The end is the arrival at a moment of *stasis*—a pause as it were in the natural forward movement of time, rather than a completion: the coming forward of a new generation, the change from spring, the time of lovers, to summer, which looks forward to the season of harvest, which in its turn will yield to winter, the time when the tree's sap will "seek the root below", to bring about another spring. It is not the time-scale of the "great globe" but the rhythms of the seasons and the time scale of human life that comedy is concerned with:

*Four seasons fill the measure of the year
There are four seasons for the life of man.*

It has, of course, always been true, and nobody this year needs to be reminded of it, that particular years and individual lives rarely correspond exactly to the paradigm—springs can be cold, summers wet, harvests late and bad, winters mild; the rhythm of the year can be upset by natural disasters, earthquakes, typhoons, floods, and drought; human lives can be cut off, or can suffer a premature winter or a grievously protracted one. This has always been so. We are no more subject to these irregularities in the seasonal pattern of the year and of human lives than our forefathers were. The age-old analogy between the life of man and the cycle of the seasons still holds for us, even though we have a rather greater life-expectancy.

Occasions of Festivity

MARRIAGE, the "bourne", as George Eliot wrote, "of so many narratives", and in the popular mind the prime example of a happy ending, is a great symbol of concord. It is, as she recognised, an end which is a beginning: a point where past and future meet and opposites are reconciled in a joyful present.

The opposites that Humanism saw as united in marriage were drawn out for us by Donald Gordon in a justly famous article on Ben Jonson's wedding masque of 1606, *Hymenaei*, which he called "Ben Jonson's Masque of Unity":³ the unity of body and soul, the physical and the spiritual, of the sexes, man and woman, of individual and individual, of family and family, of the private "heart's bond" and the public bond of law. A marriage was seen as a public festive occasion as well as a joyful private one—it still very largely is. Its concords were celebrated by fine clothes, feasting, music and

³ Donald Gordon, "Ben Jonson's Mask of Unity", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vii (1945).

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dancing. In Renaissance Courts the ceremonies lasted many days, giving occasion for the creation of works of art of all kinds, from those of the dressmaker, the jeweller, and the pastrycook up to entertainments of many kinds that have outlasted their occasion and still speak to us of harmony and joy.

At the same time as the Stuart Masque was beginning its brilliant, brief career, Italy saw the birth of a new art-form which was to have a wonderful future: the union of drama and music to make opera. Frederick Sternfield, now completing a study of the origins of opera, in a recent article,⁴ parodying Nietzsche, has written of the "Birth of Opera out of the Spirit of Florentine Humanism." He stresses the importance of humanist plots and characters drawn largely from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and of

"another factor which influenced the shape of operatic *libretti* and, thereby, the lavish employment of musical resources. This was the bow to the patron, the obligatory *lieto fine* (happy ending) which extended from the pre-history of opera into centuries far beyond the Renaissance."

In 1600 the wedding of Marie de Medici to Henry IV of France was celebrated in Florence, and among the festivities what is probably the first surviving opera was given at the Pitti Palace: that is, a continuously musical drama, as distinct from a play with incidental music. The composer was Jacopo Peri.⁵ The libretto by Rinuccini was taken from the doubly tragic story of the divine bard Orpheus, out of which over a century before Poliziano had made the first Italian secular drama.

Ottavio Rinuccini took the bold step of abandoning his famous source. His libretto includes neither the fatal looking-back of Orpheus as he leads his "half-regained Eurydice" out of Pluto's kingdom nor his hideous death, torn to pieces by the Bacchantes, enraged by his refusal to console himself for the loss of his wife with other women. Instead, as Orpheus lies lamenting on the ground, bewailing the death of his bride, Venus appears to him and urges him to seek her in the underworld and win her back by his singing. He descends to the underworld. Pluto, moved to pity, relents and releases Eurydice without any conditions. A chorus of shepherds—a pastoral element was a necessity from the *Cinquecento*—announces Orpheus is coming with his wife and greets their appearance with a joyful chorus. The opera ends with a full

finale of solo singers and chorus in joyous ensemble: the operatic finale of which Mozart is the supreme exponent.

In the preface to his published libretto, Rinuccini stated that he had restored Eurydice to life and to her consort because the happy occasion of a wedding demanded it. He knew, he said, that some would think he had been too bold in altering the end of the story, but this, he said, seemed to him "*convenevole in tempo di tanta allegrezza*." The expectations of the audience are more important than fidelity to a fable, however famous. There are times and seasons. The notion of "mirth in funeral" and "dirge in marriage" is an outrage on common human feeling.

A MARRIAGE MARKS A STAGE in human life. There used to be many other occasions for festivity, "*tempi di allegrezza*", which recurred annually, marking and structuring the course of the year, punctuating the onward flow of time, providing as it were "time off." The great survival here is the season of Christmas, the old winter festival. However much we may complain about its commercial exploitation and vulgarisation, Christmas remains for the great majority of people a "time off" from ordinary life, looked forward to and prepared for, and when it comes enjoyed as a festival of reunion—of families and of friends.

There is still something very melancholy in the thought of being "alone at Christmas." It is a seasonal celebration that is far older than its religious significance and that has survived as a time of festival, in the dark time of the year, for those for whom it has no religious meaning. The great feasts of the Church's year used to give a structure to time, and I have always thought it a brilliant innovation of the Victorian Church in this country to create Harvest Festival to puncture the long uneventful sequence of Sundays after Trinity. It still, in many places, rivals Christmas as a church-filler, and has something of the absurdity that marks communal festivals, the path to the altar being cumbered with giant marrows, pumpkins, and piles of apples.

There were once many of these seasonal festivals, some widely celebrated, such as Carnival, all over Europe, others local. Locally many of them still survive. They were traditionally a time of licence when the ordinary rules governing social life were suspended temporarily: masters waited on and obeyed their servants, children took over the roles of their elders, wives tyrannised over their husbands, or dressed as men: there was dressing-up of various kinds, disguisings and changing of clothes. Under the reign of a Lord of Misrule, a Boy Bishop, a Carnival King, decorum went "quite athwart."

⁴ Frederick Sternfield, "The Birth of Opera: Ovid, Poliziano, and the '*lieto fine*'", *Analecta Musicologia*, vol. 19 (Cologne, 1980).

⁵ No complete score survives of Peri's setting of Rinuccini's libretto for *Dafne*, which had been performed two years before, in 1598.

Dickens, who understood the nature of a popular festival, gives, in *Bleak House*, a little miniature of a family festival, which shows the necessity of annual recurrence, fixed ritual, and the inversion of roles. He describes the "great annual occasion of feasting and festival" that is Mrs Bagnet's birthday, which is "commemorated according to certain forms settled and prescribed by Mr Bagnet." A pair of fowls is essential for the meal. Mr Bagnet has to do the shopping and gets up early to procure them. On his return he asks "the old girl" what she would like for the birthday feast. On her replying that she would like a pair of fowls, these are produced from behind his back to the general surprise and joy. Mr Bagnet further requires that Mrs Bagnet shall sit in her best frock and do nothing all day, while her husband and children cook the meal. Whatever ominous smells of burning come from the kitchen, she must sit still, like a lady.

SEASONS OF HOLIDAY were privileged. During the last 50 or so years much attention has been paid to these times of licensed anarchy and to their rituals as illuminating the origins of comedy and its nature, the connections made being sometimes less than convincing when brought to the test of the interpretation of actual comedies.

The best brief treatment I know of a fundamental relation of the notion of a holiday to our enjoyment of a comedy is Ian Donaldson's study of comedy from Jonson to Fielding, to which he gave the title of *The World Upside Down*. He argues, I think rightly, that the existence of a generally accepted social order is necessary for laughter to be possible at the comic inversions by which social order is flouted, and the distinctions of degree, priority, and place are impertinently reversed by the sight of beggars on horseback and justices in the stocks.

A strongly ordered society can afford to find matter for laughter in what cannot be tolerated in a society in which authority is weak and threatened. Temporary, licensed anarchy is not threatening; the notion of a permanent state of anarchy is intolerable. The happy ending to this kind of comedy is the restoration of order, the return to the normal course of things without punishment for infractions of law, order and decency. Meanwhile, the audience has enjoyed a demonstration of the deeply cherished human conviction that "Jack's as good as his master", that "our betters" are much the same as we are, and that "fine feathers do not make fine birds." We have also been exhilarated by having breathed the air of freedom, and laughed with pleasure at the resilience of individuals resisting the tyranny of social pressures towards conformity and the "insolence of office." In the end we are brought back to the world of everyday.

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A Possible Beatitude

LET ME RETURN to where I began, with Shakespeare and the plays collected under the heading "Comedies" in the first Folio. Dr Johnson declared that the only criterion Shakespeare's fellow-actors applied was "an action that ended happily to the principal characters, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents." And replying to those who objected to Shakespeare's mingling of tragic and comic scenes in his plays, he declared that his plays were not "in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies but compositions of a distinct kind."

The compositions of a distinct kind which we call Shakespearean comedies have been variously characterised. They have been called "romantic comedies", or "festive comedies", and were described by Hazlitt as being of a "pastoral and poetical cast." This last term was taken up by Mary Lascelles in a fine essay on "Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy",⁶ where she put Shakespeare's comedies into relation with the popular pastoral romances, deriving through Italian and Spanish from Greek romance, and with the native pastoral of Robin Hood. That is, they have been seen as primarily romantic comedies with improbable plots, ending with true lovers rewarded; as festive comedies reflecting, though with a high degree of literary sophistication, holiday customs; and as comedies of a pastoral world, which, to quote Miss Lascelles is "a country of the mind to be attained only by the force of the imagination", a country that "is, and must always remain, *elsewhere* and *some other time*." I would add to this that it is a country where time seems to dally, does not press forward. The action is not a swift-moving intrigue that moves forward to a climax or solution. The end when it comes has not the rightness of inevitability, but the rightness of consonance, fulfilling expectations set up through the play that "All shall be well."

Yet Shakespeare's comedies differ from each other as much as do his tragedies and one thinks at once of exceptions. Indeed the earliest of his comedies that we recognise as profoundly Shakespearean, a work of original genius that nobody else could have written, *Love's Labour's Lost*, escapes even Johnson's definition, for in it expectation is defeated, we end with a surprise, and the ending comes near to that favourite of modern criticism "the open ending."

Love's Labour's Lost is very close to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Both are separated from Shakespeare's earliest comedies by the years of plague that closed the theatres for two years. Both

are courtly plays, aristocratic, as Shakespeare's first comedies were not, and both would seem to have been written for some private occasion. They both require a greater number of boy actors than an acting company could normally provide. In both Shakespeare consciously presents in contrast to the world of the court another small world, independent of the court, of persons with relations to each other and functions to perform. Before this we had comic servants. In both plays these persons present an entertainment to their social superiors. Pageants and plays presented by local talent were a feature of the entertainment offered to the Queen at great houses where she stayed when on progress, along with an arranged hunt such as is provided for the Princess of France, disputations serious or burlesque, dancing and singing.

Neither play has a direct source, although a great many different sources have contributed and come together. It is generally agreed that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written to be performed in celebration of a noble marriage. Nobody is quite sure what occasioned *Love's Labour's Lost*. But nobody doubts that it was written for a clever and sophisticated audience and that it contains topical allusions and "in jokes", although attempts to identify them have not met with general assent. I remember an enchanting performance at Oxford in Merton gardens, when the pleasure of the senior members was greatly enhanced by Kenneth Tynan as Holofernes giving a brilliant impersonation of a very distinguished Oxford scholar. One realised the play was made for this kind of mimicry.

It seems possible it was given at one of the Inns of Court. It is one of the few plays of Shakespeare that has an intellectual but not a popular appeal, and it has had to wait until this century to gain recognition. It provides a great feast of language, within a brilliant comedy of manners, and of its author we can say, that like Berowne, "How well he's read to reason against reading." For this rather academic play is, I need hardly say, anti-academic.

THE PLOT IS negligible. It rests on two improbabilities. The King of Navarre whose opening speech inaugurates so splendidly his "little academe", whose members are for three years to fast and study and see no women, has to be reminded by Berowne that he has quite forgotten that the Princess of France is about to arrive on an important embassy and must be entertained. The Princess, when she arrives to negotiate, has not brought with her the necessary documents to prove France's claim to Aquitaine. These are to follow. So there is a lull, the necessary time for dalliance, while the messenger with the papers is expected.

The Princess has three ladies to match the King's

⁶ Mary Lascelles, "Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy", in *More Talking of Shakespeare*, edited by John Garrett (Longman, 1959).

three lords. They have already met the three young lords, whom they praise in such extravagant terms that the Princess exclaims, "God bless my ladies! are they all in love. . . ?" The King and his lords, as we expect, find themselves, as Berowne prophesied, "by necessity forsworn", not only by having to entertain the ladies, but by falling in love with them and falling to wooing. They are mocked, teased, and flouted, their masque is a fiasco, and in the end they all, lords and ladies, settle to watch the pageant of the Worthies. This ends in confusion: a quarrel breaks out between Pompey and Hector, and as the "incens'd Worthies" prepare for combat, the expected messenger arrives.

But not with the documents that will bring peace between France and Navarre, a peace that should lead to a dynastic and other marriages. He brings news of the King of France's death. The Princess must, of course, leave at once. Navarre pleads for some pledge for the future:

*Now, at the latest minute of the hour,
Grant us your loves.*

The Princess replies with impressive gravity:

*A time, methinks, too short
To make a world without end bargain in.*

The oath that seemed so foolish and so rightly broken is seen suddenly as serious. It was after all a pledge, as the marriage vow is:

*No, no, my lord, your Grace is perjur'd much,
Full of dear guiltiness; . . .
Your oath I will not trust.*

And so she lays on him a trial of love. During her year of mourning for her father, he is to "live in some forlorn and naked hermitage,/ Remote from all the pleasures of the world." If at the end of this time he will come to her and renew his offer of marriage, she will accept him. Each lady imposes a similar year of probation. Berowne's task is the hardest. He is to spend his year among the "speechless sick", with "groaning wretches" in a hospital. It is he who makes the appropriate comment:

*Our wooing does not end like an old play,
Jack hath not Jill; these ladies' courtesy
Might well have made our sport a comedy.*

Navarre, resolutely cheerful, replies:

*Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,
And then 'twill end.*

Berowne ruefully completes the line—"That's too long for a play."

But we do not end here. We are given another surprise. Armado, anxious that the entertainment he has prepared should not be overlooked, comes forward to present "the dialogue that two learned men have compiled in praise of the owl and the cuckoo." As presenter he brings forward the con-

tenders: "This side is *Hiems*, Winter; this *Ver*, the Spring; the one maintained by the owl, the other by the cuckoo." But in place of a *débat* we are given two songs, and in reverse order, for winter has the last word. Both songs appear to "undercut" the happy ending of a comedy. The "cuckoo" mocks married men. His song "Cuckoo, cuckoo" is a "word of fear,/Unpleasing in a married ear." And in defiance of all tradition the song of the "staring owl"—usually referred to as a "scream" or "shriek" of the bird of night, and as "ominous and fearful"—is called "a merry note."

The last words of the play are of separation, not union: "You, that way: we, this way." Here is our "ironic, ambiguous ending."

I HOPE YOU HAVE REALISED by now that I have been speaking ironically in dealing so ponderously with this witty, graceful, and at times very funny play, a play that has been spoken of as musically organised, or patterned like a sequence of dances, or a game. Mary Lascelles speaks of it as a game ending with forfeits. And the lively rhythms of the enchanting songs forbid us to take the "cuckoo's song" or the merry note of the melancholy owl as other than jests. Still, although musically organised, it does not end with a musical

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conclusion, the sequence of dances does not end with a dance, and if it is like a game, it ends with a game unfinished, rather as if "rain stopped play."

Yet I do not think we need doubt that the game will be taken up. The ladies have been shown to be favourably disposed to their wooers before the game began, and have greatly enjoyed their sport. Although the end is deferred, there is every reason to believe that the young men will grow up in the year given them to do so, and will be rewarded. I imagine it was for a clever audience, accustomed to debate such topics as *Quid sit Comoedia* that Shakespeare wrote this play which is a critique of too simple a conception of a comedy as a play that ends happily with the marriages of lovers, and implies that more is needed if, in the course of the two-hour-traffic of the stage, comedy can be *Imitatio vitae, Speculum consuetudinis, Imago veritatis*, and at the same time present the imagination of happiness.

Miraculously Shakespeare achieved this in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where our confidence in a happy ending is established at the beginning in the brief conversation between Theseus and Hippolyta, former enemies but now lovers, awaiting the consummation of their love. Four days hence their wedding is to be celebrated with "pomp, with triumph, and with revelling." This confidence is justified at the close when two other couples are united with them in the temple and sit with the Duke and Duchess at the entertainment provided by the Athenian workmen, until it is time for Theseus to cry "Lovers to bed!" As the lights go out, the fairies, led by the reconciled Oberon and Titania, invade the palace to bless the bride-beds.

I cannot believe that even the most determined seeker for a discordant note could possibly find one here. True, Egeus is left out. Shakespeare does not strain our credulity, in the interest of universality, by bringing on a repentant Egeus to say, "I was wrong. Bless you, my children."

Between the first and the fifth act we are in the wood near Athens where magic reigns. Its natives are the fairies, benevolent spirits. Although Oberon and his wife are at odds at the beginning, he pities her dotage and she begs pardon and yields up the little Indian boy; and he spontaneously pities human distress. Although Puck is delighted when things go preposterously, as indeed we are, he does not wilfully aim at bringing about discord. It is by mistake, but a lucky mistake, that he anoints the eyes of the wrong Athenian. He is a rustic English Cupid, armed with magic juice instead of an arrow,

and he is under the direction of Oberon, who is not heartless, and who brings it about that sanity returns at daybreak, dispelling "the fierce vexation of a dream."

But to speak so is to side with Theseus in his dismissal of the lunatic, the lover, and the poet, and deny the truth of the higher dream of the imagination transforming the images of fancy into "something of great constancy" which is to be wondered at for its transfiguring power. It is not only the lovers but the audience at a proper performance of this enchanted and enchanting play who find their "minds transfigured" together.

A Midsummer Night's Dream opens the sequence of comedies that have held the stage continuously for three centuries, offering wonderful opportunities to actresses and to clowns and fools. These middle comedies used to be described as "happy", "gay", "golden", "festive" or "joyous." The developments of modern criticism, with its stress on interpretation and analysis brought about an intellectualisation of the approach to them, so that they came to be regarded as "sophisticated, complex plays with serious themes." Comedy had to be shown to be "in its own way an art as 'serious', as much concerned with human values as tragedy." I quote from the introduction to a collection of essays on Shakespeare's comedies.⁷ It makes very serious reading. With some welcome exceptions, there is little reference to laughter.

OF RECENT YEARS, as is noted by Molly Mahood in the 1979 *Shakespeare Survey*,⁸ we now hear about the "hard", "abrasive", and "aggressive" qualities of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It*: Arden being regarded as presenting a bitter struggle for power, and Rosalind's desire to dominate, which will continue, so that there is "No exit from Arden"; "while unnumbered critics stress the underlying sadness of *Twelfth Night*" and attention is concentrated on those who are "left out." This determination to see the sad side has even spread to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which is not "a light-hearted midsummer romp, or a springtime celebration, but rather a record of the transition from fall to winter—an effort to put the house in order, to become reconciled to the passing of fertility from the old to the young." In the theatre it is becoming a rare experience to be allowed to enjoy the wonderful inclusiveness of Shakespeare's comic worlds without having some theme or governing unitary idea imposed upon us, and usually a sad one.

In contrast to this gloom and the attempt to investigate the psychology of the characters in their efforts or failures to adjust, or to mature, is the attempt to find Christian significances in the comedies and to see their frequent resort to magic or

⁷ *Shakespearean Comedy*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, No. 14 (Edward Arnold, 1972).

⁸ Molly Mahood, "Shakespeare's Middle Comedies, A Generation of Criticism", in *Shakespeare Survey*, vol. 32, edited by Kenneth Muir (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

rituals to bring about, or celebrate, the happy endings as symbolic of the providential ordering of human affairs. This is to import into them another kind of inappropriate seriousness, as alien to the world presented to us as the discovery of banal moral truisms and philosophic problems—the favourite is appearance and reality—as constituting their basic and unifying themes, or the pretensions of experts on sexual relations, deviations, maladjustments, and adjustments. Thus a professor at Berkeley provided in 1971 a study of the comedies of Shakespeare as providing marriage guidance for the troubled young on his campus.⁹ It would be charitable to regard this book more as a symptom of a topsy-turvy situation than a contribution to Shakespearean criticism. It praised the sensible attitude of Bottom, whose self-possession is undisturbed by the attentions of the Fairy Queen, when compared with the hysteria of Romeo.

WE ARE NOT LOOKING at the often painful world of our everyday experience, in which men attempt to hold to the belief that “all is best, though we oft doubt”—and have good reason to—and that there is a purpose, though we cannot discern it, behind the chances, and changes, and inequities of this life. All is best in this world of the imagination. If there are bad people they do no permanent harm, the rogues are a source of comic pleasure, chance works well for those for whom we wish well, and nothing is irretrievable.

It is a part of the inclusiveness of the imaginary world of these comedies that ideals of conduct are coloured by religious terms, and these are naturally Christian, and that both sorrow and happiness can be solemnised: by the rite performed by the penitent Claudio at Hero’s tomb, and by the appearance of Hymen at the close of *As You Like It*, which deliberately relates concord on earth to “mirth in heaven” in the convention of the marriage masque.

Over 40 years ago, in her beautiful book, *The Fool*,¹⁰ Enid Welsford ended by declaring the Fool to be “a creator of spiritual freedom” and replied to the charge that the comic writer is producing “the poetry of escape” by the retort “Well, certainly. . . but whether you regard it as a capital offence or not depends upon your point of view.” She went on:

“To those who do not repudiate the religious insight of the race, the human spirit is uneasy in this world because it is at home elsewhere, and escape from the prison-house is possible not only in fancy but in fact. The theist believes in possible beatitude, because he disbelieves in the

dignified isolation of humanity. To him, therefore, romantic comedy is serious literature because it is a foretaste of the truth.”

“The Days that Make Us Happy”

A LITTLE WHILE AGO, someone asked me what I was going to take as my subject in my Darwin Lecture, and when I said “Happy Endings”, adding “and whatever has happened to them”, my questioner said, “I suppose it is something to do with the decline in religious belief.” I did not quote Enid Welsford in order to make this point; but because the belief she refers to is not a coherent body of doctrines but a general belief in the existence and reality of spiritual values. Even more I quoted it because of the connection she sees between “belief in the possibility of beatitude and disbelief in the dignified isolation of humanity.”

I am always very doubtful of the possibility of quantifying the amount of religious belief in different ages and societies. Pilgrimages were a religious institution; but *The Canterbury Tales* does not suggest that in the Ages of Faith, as we call them, the pilgrims were wholly moved by religious motives. Poor Margery Kempe was left behind, stranded in Europe, by her companions who found her religious fervour more than they could bear.

There can, on the other hand, be no question of the decline in *church-going* in this country and in Europe. But this is not true of the United States, and one can hardly speak of a decline in religious belief there when all three presidential candidates let it be known that they were “twice-born”, and commentators have told us, on the basis of opinion polls, that it appears that a very high percentage of the population are prepared to make the same affirmation. And one has to remember that this is not the idiom of even all Protestants, much less of Catholics. Yet American plays, poetry, novels and criticism show the same depressing cult of cheerlessness as do English.

My own feeling is that this has less to do with changes in conceptions as to the nature of the universe than with the general breakdown of social bonds, a process that began with the growth of industrialism and the growth of large cities, and which has been immensely accelerated as the technological revolution has succeeded in the industrial. This process is further advanced in the United States than in Europe, and I wonder whether this does not account partly for the strength of organised religion there.

I do not wish to suggest scepticism about the genuineness of religious belief among those large numbers who have the habit of regular religious observance, but only to say that to be a member of a congregation, whatever else it may mean to the

⁹ Hugh M. Richmond, *Shakespeare’s Sexual Comedies* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1971).

¹⁰ Enid Welsford, *The Fool* (Faber and Faber, 1935).

individuals who make it, does fulfil a social need. It overcomes the sense of isolation and the divisiveness that marks a largely urbanised society, the loss of the sense of being a member of a community, a neighbourhood. Discussion of the problem of "loneliness" is everywhere. Societies such as the Samaritans have come into being, so that people who seem to have neither families nor neighbours can at least telephone to someone to talk to.

This is hardly the "dignified isolation" that Miss Welsford spoke of as opposed to the "possibility of beatitude" as a human ideal: we have a new name for it today: "alienation." This is assumed by many to be the natural condition of human beings, if we would only have the courage to acknowledge it. It is also used as a term of art in the theatre, as something a director should aim at, and seems also a widespread notion of the artist's relation to society and of the writer to his reader. In some of the most admired exponents of modern literary criticism this alienation takes the form of alienation from the past. Either the works of past ages have to be drastically reinterpreted to make them conform to this cheerless view of human beings as essentially lonely, and their happy endings shown to be illusory, or they have to be totally deconstructed for the critic to find significance within the text, and behind, in its gaps and silences.

The latter mode of criticism rejects the notion that criticism is "the common pursuit of right judgment" for a complete subjectivity. The practice of "deconstruction" plainly gives its practitioners great pleasure; but it is essentially a lonely pleasure, a self-regarding gratification, something quite different from happiness. And of course the game can be played with any written material, advertisements for hair-spray as well as with a sonnet of Shakespeare's. It denies that works of art contain values.

These performances seem often to be written for the admiration of other practitioners of the same tricks, just as some admired novelists seem more concerned to exemplify a theory of fiction to be read by other theorists of fiction than to engage the sympathies and interests of their readers by presenting them with a fictitious world. They appear to be deliberately written for a limited and highly specialised audience. Recently, David Lodge, who has himself been in at what one might call the deep end and seems now to have emerged into what I suppose some may regard as the shallow, has confessed that

"As an academic and university teacher specialising in modern literature and literary theory, I spend much of my time these days

reading books and articles that I can barely understand and that cause my wife (a graduate with a good honours degree in literature) to utter loud cries of pain and nausea if her eyes happen to fall on them."¹¹

The point he wished to make was that "a very unhealthy gap has opened up between educated discourse inside and outside the academy." I think Professor Lodge is right to see this further example of the divisiveness of our society, and I find it troubling.

IT IS ONLY TOO EASY to indulge in large generalisations, as I fear I have been doing for the last few minutes, and it may seem rather absurd of me in face of the enormous problems that confront us in the modern world to worry about what is happening in the teaching of literature in universities. But that has been my sphere of action for 50 years, and I feel conscious of what seems to be a loss of confidence in the value of the study of literature, shown by the invasion and taking over of the discipline of literary study by alien disciplines and by a desire to reinterpret works of past ages to find in them the reflection of our own discontents. I think there has been an over-concentration on the literature of the present century, and on contemporary literature, at the expense of the literature of the past, as if it provides a norm. This has partly arisen from a desire to respond to the student demand to read what, on a superficial view, seems to them more relevant to their interests and problems, and partly from the pressure to find unworked fields and unlimited unpublished material to dig in for the graduate thesis, which is fast becoming as essential in this country as it has been for years in the United States, for anyone wishing to find a career in the university world.

I believe that a disinterested approach to the literature of the past can liberate us from being dominated by the anxieties, problems, and even more by the clichés of today: and particularly from accepting the notions of the artist as necessarily alienated and at odds with his world, and of art as a form of self-therapy, or as an exploration of the problems, metaphysical, moral, or political, of life ending with "dusty answers." It can also help us to question the current belief that the imagination of unhappiness has more to give us of "true experience" than the imagination of happiness; that misery gives us more insight into the "life of things" than joy.

Some years ago, discussing tragedy, I contrasted the rarity of tragedy, which seems to flourish only for a brief period, like a rare flower that needs a certain climate and soil before it can flower and then disappears, with comedy that seems like a

¹¹ David Lodge, "Structural Defects", *The Observer* (23 March 1980).

hardy perennial, since almost every age has produced comedies that remain readable and actable in later ages. I hope the present sourness will not prove me wrong, and that we shall not much longer continue to doubt the possibility of happiness, and regard the absurd as cause for a metaphysical shudder rather than as an occasion for laughter.

I was once asked where Wordsworth said, "The days that make us happy make us wise." I had to reply that, although Wordsworth would, I think, have agreed with the sentiment, the line was not by Wordsworth but is the last line of "Biography" by John Masefield, a poet not very highly regarded today. It has always been held that the literature and the art of the past are a source of values and of

wisdom, and that artists, including poets, have joy in the making. "Is it not the essence of the artistic way of looking at things that it looks on the world with a happy eye?" This aphorism is by a modern sage with a higher reputation as a sage than Masefield enjoys as a poet. It is from Wittgenstein's *Notebooks*. He went on, translating Schiller, "Life is serious, art is gay", using the latter term as Yeats did when he wrote,

Civilisations rise and fall

And those who build them again are gay.

Wittgenstein concluded with another old-fashioned remark: "For there is certainly something in the conception that the end of art is the beautiful, and the beautiful is what makes us happy."

The Brightest? the Best?

The Kennedys & the Kings—By ESMOND WRIGHT

A BRITISH READER should be warned. Harris Wofford's *Of Kennedys and Kings*¹ is not—yet another—treatment of King Arthur at Camelot Camp David, but a study of two Kennedys (John and Bobby) and two Kings (Martin Luther and Coretta). It is yet one more assessment of the 1960s by a former Civil Rights activist, an admirer and protégé of Sargent Shriver, who married Eunice (the eldest of the Kennedy clan) but who was always seen by them as too liberal and too much a do-gooder to fit easily into the rough sports played at Hyannisport and Washington. Shriver set up the Peace Corps, of which for a time Harris Wofford was an Associate Director. Wofford served with it in Ethiopia, where he heard the news of the assassination of the President. His real hero was fellow-liberal Chester Bowles, who was sent into exile for his opposition to the "Bay of Pigs."

Much of the book is a retread of the familiar: the golden glow of 1960–61; the quest for "the brightest and the best"; the hopes engendered by the young, glamorous and ruthless Senator; the harsh realities of "the Bay of Pigs"; the assassinations; the riots at the 1968 Democratic convention, at which Wofford managed to get arrested (a naive note here of "I must be arrested" because Gandhi said it was a necessary passport to the respect of other liberals); and the contrasts between the Kennedys and President Johnson. All of this, seen in the context of the Reagan Presidency, reads now as

very faded, a product largely of Washington and media incest. A keener wind is blowing now.

That said, the book does highlight a number of aspects of the Kennedy years and has, in its later sections, unusual frankness.

First, it is clear how important in 1960 (as in 1976) was the black vote. It went for Kennedy:

"When we arrived two days in advance, we knew that more than a majority of the estimated 250 or so black delegates and alternates (out of a total of about 4,500) were with Kennedy. The day before the convention, the Senator had spoken effectively at a large NAACP rally. Adam Clayton Powell had come out for Johnson, but practically every other leading black Democrat was by then for Kennedy, and almost none for Stevenson. One could hear repeated stories of disappointment with Adlai; they paralleled my own experience. In 1959 Stevenson had invited me to spend an afternoon talking with him about the report of the Civil Rights Commission; I left depressed by his ambivalence, discomfort, and weariness about racial issues. The noticeable lack of black support for Stevenson was a significant depressant to the Stevenson movement at Los Angeles. We were quick to call delegates' attention to the fact that there were almost no blacks in the Stevenson demonstrations."

Second, Mr Wofford makes clear how cool, calculating and Machiavellian the Kennedy Presidency was. The machine was primed by the millions of a doting and himself devious father,

¹ *Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties*. By HARRIS WOFFORD. Faber, £9.50.

and manned by ruthless operators. There was from neither of the brothers any passionate conviction over civil rights until very late in the term; and even then it was always a calculating concern. This is well portrayed here in the long, perhaps over-long, account of how JFK was persuaded to make his famous phone-call to Coretta King in 1960, showing a personal concern that some believe won him Negro (as they then were) votes—and victory—in the election. Bobby Kennedy's ruthlessness, a carefully nurtured plant, came, after all, by way of Joe McCarthy's investigative committee; and his was the cutting edge of the team in 1961.

Wofford is interesting, also, in his probing of the transformation in Bobby Kennedy after November 1963. He attributes it less to the horror of the events in Dallas than to his awareness that, since there were covert attempts planned to assassinate Castro, John Kennedy's murder may have been indirectly at Castro's orders; and that, in one sense, brother had been responsible—however indirectly—for the death of brother. In a mind that was intensely puritan, this might well have wrought the changes that led to the half-demented hunger for crowds and for suffering and the curious evangelism behind his own campaign for the Presidency in 1968, until he too was struck down.

"What surely shocked the Attorney General was the recognition, as he put the facts together, that his brother and the government of the United States were entangled with the most evil forces he could imagine, and that Sam Giancana, John Rosselli, and their like held an enormous power to blackmail not only John Kennedy and his family but any government of the United States. The Mafia leaders were privy to what may have been the worst national secret in the history of the United States, and the most embarrassing personal secret about John Kennedy. Nothing could damage the reputation of the United States government and of the Kennedy administration more than disclosure that it had conspired with organized crime to murder the head of a foreign government. Nothing could damage the personal

reputation of John Kennedy more than detailed and public allegations of a sexual liaison, while in the White House, with a woman who at the same time was having an affair with a notorious Mafia chieftain."

Wofford is explicit in his charges of the involvement of John F. Kennedy with Mrs Exner, of the President's sexual aberrations, and of the possible links with Giancana and the Mafia. However discreetly hinted at, this is a sordid tale; at Arthur's Camelot it was not the King who erred. To this Wofford adds some embarrassing touches in describing how the President would summon members of the Special Forces to show their prowess at weekends at Hyannisport, and in recalling his request to the CIA to send over the nearest man in their ranks to "James Bond." This is not the Arthurian world of Alfred Lord Tennyson but of Sapper's Bulldog Drummond. That First Inaugural was, after all, a call to arms; but at times the trumpet hit very false notes.

In this Court a man was measured less by ability than by cleverness, by what Wofford calls "the Bloomsbury syndrome." It does not produce respect for the system.

NOR ARE ALL the references to Martin Luther King especially kind. There were both ambition and fear in the man, an uncertainty whether his role was that of minister or of Messiah or of martyr. Here the note of megalomania could be heard, and this too is not endearing. But then not all liberation movements can have Cavours alongside their Garibaldis. There was no doubt, however, of King's power to move an audience.

"If I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of a general and panoramic view of the whole human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, 'Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?'—I would take my mental flight by Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. . . . I would move on by Greece, and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality.

But I wouldn't stop there. . . . Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, 'If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the Twentieth Century, I will be happy.' Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up.

But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the Twentieth

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Century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding—something is happening in our world. . . . Now, I'm just happy that God has allowed me to live in this period, to see what is unfolding."

We need, I think, a long rest from Camelot. It is probable that these years will not stand the test of history as well as they caught the imagination of contemporaries. The Kennedys cultivated artists

and writers, and they reaped a rich dividend of fame and fortune. They attracted intellectuals (who wrote them up lavishly) and speech-writers, who enshrined their words—JFK's more than Bobby's—in splendid prose. But the crude LBJ did more in practice than all the Kennedys and Kings put together.

The sad fact is that the best are not always the brightest, nor the brightest the best.

Travelling in Time

Recent Fiction—By PENELOPE LIVELY

TAKING LIBERTIES with time is one of the novelist's privileges. Here are five writers using past, future, the presence of the past, the shadow of things to come, in individual ways to make fiction out of realities of one kind or another. Ann Schlee and J. G. Farrell take the historical novel form and in contrasting ways tell stories as pertinent to today as to the Victorian age; D. M. Thomas suggests through the fantasies of the psyche that personality may be influenced by the future as well as the past; Muriel Spark plays with the nature of fiction itself against the now fictional seeming background of London in the early 1950s; Doris Lessing retreats into the airy timelessness of galactic colonialism for a science-fiction meditation on human nature and its inadequacies. Once again, one sees the flexibility of the novel allowing very disparate authors to make it serve very different purposes.

*Rhine Journey*¹ is excellent: economical, vivid, compelling. Ann Schlee is the author of several historical novels for older children and this, too, is an historical novel in the sense that it is set in 1851. But Ann Schlee has none of those vices of the historical novelist that can put one off the form for life—the fatal urge to instruct, the confusion of fiction with history, the need to have all that arduous research show in the text—and has written a brief and powerful novel about the emotional crisis of a fortyish spinster, Charlotte Morrison, on a summer excursion down the Rhine with her clergyman brother, his wife and daughter. There is a twist at the end which sets the story in a wider context than Charlotte's wrestlings with her own suppressed sexuality and her relationship with her family, and which is heralded by the author's unobtrusive historical note at the beginning; it is a measure of the novel's success that one is so absorbed that this note is quite forgotten as one reads—

only after closing the book do you think, ah yes, now I see why that was there.

The Morrisons become acquainted with another English family, the Newmans. Edward Newman, the husband, bears a strong physical resemblance—or seems to, at first—to the man with whom Charlotte was in love many years ago. This reminder of the past reawakens powerful feelings and prompts a series of fantasy conversations in which Edward Newman is fused with this visitor from her youth: "gross imaginings" which become so forceful that Charlotte is barely able to distinguish them from reality.

This personal crisis is played out against the background of the Victorian journey, exquisitely described in spare and evocative prose: the Rhine, the hotels, the donkey-borne ascent of a mountain, the delicacies of social intercourse between Mrs Morrison and Mrs Newman, the English travellers' stern consciousness of national status and the daily cultural demands on the responsible and responsive tourist. The Morrisons' daughter is admired by a young Prussian officer, and her rapturous sexual awakening runs parallel with her aunt's grimly subdued struggle. And there is not a word to spare; at the end of the book the reader is impressed by the strength of the effect—of place, of people—achieved without any verbal excesses or indulgences. *Rhine Journey* is the kind of book to which such terms as "charming" and "period piece" attach themselves, but it is more than that: it remains in the head long after the last page is turned. And, as an extra bonus, it is a most agreeably produced book: frontispiece, delightful 19th-century reproductions of Rhine scenery at each chapter head and—out of a whole batch of novels—the only one to boast such small elegances as an extra binding and that striped cord caterpillar at top and bottom of the spine, the legacies of times when books were more lavishly constructed.

¹ *Rhine Journey*. By ANN SCHLEE. Macmillan £5.95.

NINETEEN CHAPTERS, fifty thousand words: *The Hill Station*² is half a novel. It ends, abruptly, in mid-episode, at the point of its author's premature death in 1979, and the reader—knowing this will happen, but having forgotten—is brought up with a sickening jolt, reminded in a distressingly practical way that a book is tethered to a writer. Somehow, one can lose sight of that little fact.

It was going to be a fine novel; the publishers, and Farrell's friends, were quite right to decide on publication—anyone who admired his work will want to read it. The appreciations by John Spurling and Margaret Drabble, and the memoir by Malcolm Dean which conclude the book are a thoughtful and illuminating addition; included also is a diary kept by Farrell on a journey to India in 1971. John Spurling has pieced together from Farrell's notes a probable projection of the book's continuation and ending, and it must be said at once that the surviving text does not read at all like a first draft—though it is assumed that that is what it is—save for a few stylistic uneasinesses and the occasional passage that would surely have been pruned eventually. For anyone interested in a novelist's technique this is interesting in itself; there seem to be varying opinions as to Farrell's method—whether he did subsequent drafts or not—but this book certainly reads as though he was one of those writers who put it down as it is going to be with little by way of revision. Certainly, John Spurling's deductions about the destination of the story bear this out; Farrell must have known how it was going from the start.

The hill station of the title is Simla. The book opens with that kind of spacious, leisurely and specific scene-setting that one expects of Farrell. Having appreciated the concision and density with which Ann Schlee depicted the German ambience of 1851, the reader now admires in Farrell's picture of Victorian India a totally different kind of writing—in no way diffuse or self-indulgent but simply preferring a slower pace and a more minute attention to detail.

Mr and Mrs McNab and their niece Emily travel to Kalka, stopping-off point for Simla, in the same railway compartment as a Mrs Forester and the Reverend William Kingston. Dr McNab, of course, is the same dry, level-headed, scientifically-ahead-of-his-time Dr McNab of *The Siege of Krishnapur*, and we are reminded, in a typically Farrellean passage, that Dr and Mrs McNab "had met under strained circumstances . . . in some battle or other with lots of flies about and without clothes on . . ."—Mrs McNab being Miriam of *Krishnapur*. And very good it is to meet Dr McNab again, just as it was an agreeable surprise to find the Major of *Troubles*, appropriately and convincingly adjusted

to another time, cropping up in *The Singapore Grip*.

The subsequent chapters are taken up with the arrival in Kalka and ascent to Simla, and the absorption of the arrivals into the complex society of Simla in the summer season. Mrs Forester is, it would seem, something of an adventuress whose tarnished reputation has preceded her; she strikes up a friendship with the girl Emily, newly arrived from England and worried about the condition of her wardrobe and absence of a ladies' maid to get her into proper shape for the young officers whose eye she has already caught on the train journey. Emily feels herself a cut above her uncle and aunt, despite her affection for them—"They lacked that little touch of aristocratic *ampleur* in their attitude to life"—and is sharp enough soon to realise that her association with Mrs Forester may do her no good, socially.

THESE WORRIES are interwoven with Dr McNab's more taxing involvement with Mr Kingston, the tubercular vicar of one of the Simla parishes, who has incurred the displeasure of the Bishop and become an object of local censure by introducing Romish practices into his services. Religious beliefs are wryly presented as a curious mixture of dogmatism and social convenience, with McNab himself not so much a non-believer as "a man at a concert who is tone deaf." We know already about McNab's enlightened attitudes to medicine; he is in Simla, indeed, to find time to finish his treatise on Indian medicine. His conviction—voiced in *Krishnapur*—that cholera is waterborne has now expanded into the wider consideration that there must be a "moral or a social dimension" to disease. He is sturdily dubious of the breezy and worldly Bishop of Simla, who gives a literal display of muscular Christianity in a forearm-bending contest with one of his curates; the Bishop's victory over the younger man "whose forearm . . . resembled a leg of mutton" appears to McNab as a further evidence of the link between the moral and the physical. But his is only the background to the scene in which Kingston's ritualistic service is interrupted and finally broken up by "No Popery" protesters, shortly before the book ends, with its complex tapestry of concerns so sadly incomplete.

It is in other ways a sparer book than the rest of Farrell's work. He has not allowed himself that authorial omniscience that is characteristic of *Krishnapur* (just once—"a few thousand miles away in London a familiar bearded leonine figure sucking a pencil turned a little in his seat in the British Museum to see the hands of the clock at the northern quarter of the Reading Room"), and that turned on its head, so to speak, the concept of the historical novel. *Krishnapur* is not an historical novel in the conventional sense of presenting the

² *The Hill Station*. By J. G. FARRELL. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £6.50.

past through the wisdoms—or prejudices—of another century, but far more subtly allows its author to stand squarely in the text himself, equipped with the insights of a different time, and join in the arguments that rage about technology, about medicine, about colonialism. It was a marvellous device, one that makes most other historical fiction look tawdry and contrived, and I think I wish he had used it more in *The Hill Station*. But that is perhaps an impertinence; Farrell must have felt that a more direct and less ruminative approach would suit this book, and it is a pleasure to have even this fragment of another Farrell novel.

READING *THE WHITE HOTEL*³ is like reading a Bergman film. You are battered with symbolism, in perpetual pursuit of images, of references, of bizarre surrealist objects—a flying breast, a petrified embryo, a gliding womb. I'm not sure that I enjoyed it, but I am certainly respectful; this is a powerful piece of writing, highly complex, carefully structured. Its meanings and intention fall gradually into place; I suspect that it would improve still further on subsequent readings.

Thomas's bold device has been to present his heroine, a half-Jewish Viennese singer called Lisa, first by means of her own extended sexual fantasy in verse-form which she has sent to Freud, whose account of her case-history forms the third part of the novel. In the second part we are given a detached account of the same carnal spree in a mysterious lakeside white hotel by the girl and her lover. The sexual performances are explicit, violent, and eccentric: the girl's hair catches fire as the officer masturbates her in a train, an old priest in the hotel drinks milk from her breast, a widow they befriend joins them in an act of troilism. The fantasy becomes wilder and wilder; in Freud's words, later in the book—or rather in the words of D. M. Thomas being Freud—"The psyche of an hysteric is like a child who has a secret, which no-one must know, but everyone must guess." And the reader, bewildered at first, begins to guess: behind all this there must be a pattern, and indeed there is.

There is always a problem for the reader in any book in which a "real" character becomes part of the fictional cast: how far is the author manipulating such a character and how far is he/she behaving authentically? Here, the problem for the reader less well versed than Thomas in Freudian theory is to know how far precisely he abides by it. And this matters, because the central proposition of the novel is that disturbance of the personality, in rare cases such as Lisa—or Frau Anna G. as she

becomes in Freud's case-history—may be conditioned by the future as well as by the past. Lisa/Anna herself believes that she is cursed with second sight; Freud, in a letter to her, declares his belief in telepathy. And throughout the early fantasy part of the novel (which most effectively reconstructs the surrealist logic of dreams in which no eccentricity of behaviour is questioned and time itself is fractured) there recur images that are not explicable in terms of the later revelations about Lisa's childhood and early life through which Freud untangles the origin of her hysterical illness. A mass of travellers disgorge from a train on a deserted plain; Lisa dreams of herself and many others falling into a trench; she runs from soldiers, falls, feels bullets pumping into her back. The 20th century's symbols of horror are universal enough for the reader to suspect where the narrative is going to take us—on into the griefs of Lisa's future and the ultimate horrific nature of her death.

Sex and death pervade the book. Lisa herself says, in the fantasy in the white hotel: "If I'm not thinking about sex, I'm thinking about death. . . . Sometimes both at the same time"; and the remark is bitterly apt, given what will come.

The white hotel itself, as Freud explains, represents the body of the mother; ". . . a place without sin, without our load of remorse; for the patient tells us she has mislaid her suitcase on the way, and comes without even a tooth-brush." Indeed, symbols flow through the first half of the book in such profusion that the reader does at times feel snowed under by them, desperately flipping backwards through the pages to check on black cats, whalebone corsets, clots of menstrual blood. . . . "The unconscious is a precise and even pedantic symbolist", says Freud, pondering Anna's case, and yes, one supposes it must be; but even so one occasionally wriggles in resistance. Is a drying-out umbrella in a hall inevitably symbolic of a discharged penis, and not just recent rain? But that kind of objection is perhaps unfair, or, in a way, pointless; the novel either has to be accepted on its own terms, or not at all. Either the reader enters into Thomas's psychological construction—Freud, umbrellas, flying breasts and all—or he doesn't.

I did, though with one reservation about the final section, in which we appear to be meeting Lisa after her death, in some kind of paradise that has resolved all her tensions and perplexities. Or that may not be what it is. . . . Either way it seems a confusing coda after the harrowing account of Lisa's death. This last is a fine and searing piece of writing, as bleak as the events it describes. One of the remarkable aspects of the novel is the dexterity with which Thomas moves from one stylistic form to another—straight narrative, case-history, exaggerated fantasy. *The White Hotel* is not a book that will appeal to everyone, but I think it would be difficult to be unaffected by it.

³ *The White Hotel*. By D. M. THOMAS. Gollancz, £6.95.

LOITERING WITH INTENT is vintage Spark:⁴ London in the Fifties, a gallery of baroque characters, a plot that twists and turns. The blurb-writer reckons that it must rank as one of her very best books; no, I wouldn't agree with that, remembering *The Abbess of Crewe*, *The Girls of Slender Means*, *The Takeover*. It seems to me in fact second-rank Spark, but nevertheless there is plenty of wit, plenty of characteristic sharp comment, plenty of story. Though it is with the story, I think, that some of the trouble arises.

Spark plots have always been opaque—miss a casual aside and you have lost your way—and the narrative of *Loitering With Intent* is peculiarly so. The narrator, Fleur Talbot, is writing a novel called *Warrender Chase*; the characters and events of the book start to manifest themselves in her own life. A book within a book. . . . Now the difficulty of the book-within-a-book technique is that the secondary book has to be made to engage the reader's attention to the same degree as the primary novel, and this *Warrender Chase* doesn't do. You have to keep turning back to check what is going on; even in a novel of this brevity (221 pages, large print), confusions arise about who is who and what they are up to.

Fleur gets a job at a dubious and slightly mysterious organisation called the Autobiographical Association, run by Sir Quentin Oliver, which exists to gather and store data for the eventual autobiographies of its members, a heterogeneous collection of nonentities—Lady Bernice ("Bucks") Gilbert, the Baronne Clotilde du Loiret, a Mrs Wilks (who has survived "The gross indicacies of the Russian revolution" and explains that "It gives one a quite different sense of humour"), an unfrocked priest. . . . Fleur observes these eccentrics, strikes up a relationship with Sir Quentin's half-senile, incontinent, but conveniently shrewd old mother, and lives a bed-sitting-room life amid her own cronies: "Life on the intellectual fringe in 1949 was a universe by itself. It was something like life in Eastern Europe today."

Sir Quentin bears a resemblance to the hero of Fleur's novel; Fleur manipulates the members of the Autobiographical Association: increasingly, fact and fiction coincide and collide. Fleur remarks, "I was a magnet for experiences that I needed." She notes the way in which life, for a writer, has a knack of providing experience conveniently relevant to the work in hand. Although, as she points out with irritation, the characters in a novel are so much easier to deal with:

"In a novel the author invents characters and arranges them in convenient order. Now that I

come to write biographically I have to tell of whatever actually happened and whoever naturally turns up. The story of a life is a very informal party; there are no rules of precedence and hospitality, no invitations."

Fleur's manuscript is stolen and Sir Quentin promotes a conspiracy to prevent its publication; but he also uses "the very words, phrases, ideas" in his compilations. Events get wilder and wilder and, it has to be said, sometimes hard to follow.

The novel is a clever meditation on the nature of fiction itself; on the relation of truth and fiction, on the amoral detachment of the artist. Fleur's fidelity is to her book; she casts a cold eye on the goings-on of the real world. "There's something a bit harsh about you, Fleur", says her lover's wife. "You're not really womanly, are you?" To which Fleur responds by tearing up her novel and bursting into tears, to demonstrate womanliness. But adds, "Get out. . . . You and your husband between you have ruined my literary work." And, of course, reconstitutes the torn manuscript the next morning.

The writer's nightmare—the novelist's *Huis Clos*—would be incarceration for an unspecified time with a group of people who reveal themselves to be his own characters: "You made us, now live with us." *Loitering With Intent* has some of that sense of menacing claustrophobia, with the difference that Fleur, despite her ups and downs with publishers and disappearing manuscripts, is never other than on top of the situation. She is engaged and involved, but she also calls the tune; she enjoys a degree of artistic alienation. And, reading the book, one feels something of the same detachment. Muriel Spark never fails to entertain; this novel, like the others, abounds in witticisms, in felicities of style, in surprises. But its very staginess—which of course is deliberate and a reflection of the fictional mysteries that the author is investigating—prevents emotional involvement. You enjoy, appreciate, respect; but you don't, in the end, care.

I HAVE NOT READ the first two books in Doris Lessing's *Canopus in Argos: Archives* sequence, and wondered at first it this meant I ought not to review *The Sirian Experiments*.⁵ But the reviewer is also a reader, and if a single book of a sequence is intended to work on its own—which presumably it is—then one of the things it has to do is persuade you to get hold of the others.

Doris Lessing, in a Preface, hopes that reviewers and readers will see the series "as a framework that enables me to tell (I hope) a beguiling tale or two; to put questions, both to myself and to others; to explore ideas and sociological possibilities." There has always been an element of didacticism, of using

⁴ *Loitering With Intent*. By MURIEL SPARK. Bodley Head, £6.50.

⁵ *The Sirian Experiments*. By DORIS LESSING. Jonathan Cape, £6.95.

the novel as a vehicle for instruction, in her work; and those who admire the elegance and freedom of her short stories—in which this element is absent—may feel that it spoils much of the *Children of Violence* sequence, especially the later, London-based, books: too much earnest argument, the sound of too many axes being ground, a ponderous solemnity. Perhaps this is not fair comment; Mrs Lessing is a political novelist, a novelist of ideas. Ideas are serious matters, so is politics. But there are ways of writing seriously, and fictional ways of exploring ideas, that avoid overstatement, that retain the strengths of the novel form—extend them, even—without making the reader feel lectured at. And the difficulty with *The Sirian Experiments* is that, interesting as it in many respects is, it again leaves one feeling that fiction has been used as a polemic device.

AMBIEN II, the narrator, is an administrator, a female bureaucrat of the Sirian Empire who tours the galaxy in a timeless (Sirians don't die, except accidentally) employment of inspection and manipulation. The Sirian bureaucrats think pretty well of themselves, but in fact are ideologically inferior to the Canopeans, the rival empire also involved in a perennial meddling with the affairs of its subject planets. The book is, in one respect, an account of Ambien's voyage of self-discovery, and a very tiresome creature she is too: humourless, self-important, remarkably unperceptive even for one of her calling. Mrs Lessing admits in her preface that she does not much care for her either, though she shares some of her preoccupations: "... the nature of the group mind, the collective minds we are all part of, though we are seldom prepared to acknowledge this." Ambien has a distressingly negative relationship with a former mate, Ambien I, and is attracted to a Canopean opposite number, Klorathy, but with an equally dispiriting absence of zest: "We were attracted, told each other so, in the way of course appropriate to our life stages: both of us had our breeding-bond phases behind us."

Sirians and Canopeans are addicted to conferences; like a bunch of academics they confer here, there, and everywhere, at the drop of a hat—or a space-ship—devising ever more ingenious ways of manipulating and testing the various species under their dominance. And, of course, Mrs Lessing is using them—"alignments" for the purpose of producing progeny, conference-addiction, charmless personalities—to demonstrate what a pass things have (or may) come to, just as much as she uses the condition of their subject peoples, slave-creatures subjected to eugenic experiments or reduced to despair by lack of purpose when there is a surfeit of everything and

technology takes care of all the work. The difficulty is to bear this in mind, and not become exasperated by Ambien's bland and literal mentality as she scurries through the millennia, witnessing disasters and inhumanities and ponderously coming to the conclusion that there may be more than one way of looking at things.

Both Sirians and Canopeans are obsessed with the condition of a planet called Rohanda which sounds like our own; Ambien visits it at different times to check up on what is going on and is suitably aghast. Experiments are performed, species either fail to develop or slaughter each other. Another colonising planet, Shammat, interferes also and epitomises evil, though the Sirians and Canopeans, high-minded as they are, get up to some fairly dubious undertakings themselves. Ambien runs into danger—even galactic civil servants can be misunderstood—and nearly becomes an inhuman sacrifice in an Aztec-sounding city called Grakconkranpatl. This last is one of the more compelling narrative episodes in the book, and there are several such: Doris Lessing has always been a fine story-teller and she demonstrates her skills in this book as much as in any other. The obstacle is Ambien's soul-searchings and her earnest and over-long conversations with her colleagues. Eavesdropping in the corridors of power is never as gripping as you think it is going to be.

And of course no resolution is possible, given the nature of the scheme and the subject of the author's satire—if satire is the right word.

"Once upon a time {she says in her preface}, when I was young, I believed things easily, both religious and political; now I believe less and less. But I wonder about more. . . ."

THE SIRIAN EXPERIMENTS is a speculation—about behaviour, about politics, about the universe. And as such, it is ambitious; the imaginary ambiances are furnished both with the stuff of science fiction and the familiar cruelties and mental aberrations of our own world: experiments are performed by one race on another to determine powers of endurance—"They did not enjoy causing pain, they insisted. But they believed that the experimentees, being of an inferior kind, did not feel physical or psychological pain as they themselves did." And as a speculation it cannot, of course, provide an ending. All novels have their ambiguities, and very properly so; fiction asks questions but does not necessarily provide answers. *The Sirian Experiments* is peculiarly loaded with such problems; those who find this intriguing will want to see what Mrs Lessing is going to offer in the next volume.

Two Poems by Eugenio Montale

Nixon in Rome

In limited numbers, scrutinised
but also exposed to the showers of stones and insults,
we're invited to the banquet
for the welcome Guest. Black tie, no
tails or decorations. It's no use brushing
sashes and useless stuff. We'll be the chosen few
under the flashbulbs, mentioned in the afternoon
newspapers that no one reads.
We'll have the Cuirassiers, a Cardinal,
former Excellencies and the highest guarantors
of the Constitution,
Sherry consommé, salmon, asparagus
eaten with tongs, Roederer *brut*,
speeches, interpreters, the orchestra
that will play "Rhapsody in Blue"
and Jommelli and Boccherini to close.
The chef has been engaged in a competition
and only for him, perhaps, are we at the Epiphany
of a New Way.
The Guest has arrived; some
deny that he may have been substituted.
The guests don't seem the same.
Perhaps the banquet will be postponed. But
we rise to our feet for the toasts with our glasses and
look each other in the face. Providing Offenbach's
Brigands have not sat down in our places
everything seems normal. The director
of the special services says so.

An Invitation to Dinner

The little nuns on Lake Tiberias
carrying a huge pike with difficulty,
destined for His Holiness, they said,
asked me to stay, in case the Holy Father
should declare forfeit (which later happened).
Not without the assurance that, although "at large",*
I was a good Catholic. Unfortunately
generous sisters, I am awaited at the Mount of Olives,
was my reply, received with regrets
blessings and more. And so I continued my journey.
It would have been the first pike of my life
and I missed it, whether to my loss or advantage
I don't know. A pike or a snare?

Translated by N. S. Thompson

* in English in the original

Alistair Elliot

Trying to Read Outdoors

The seeds of rose-bay willow-herb float down
swirling in silence on the streams of air
above the noisy river. Now and then
a leaf is softly turned, turned back again,
the silky scholarship of summer.

Still more the insects, golden after lunch,
prick out the turbulence. Some draw bright lines
across a shadow; most, in fuzzy schools,
drift on a current, intermingling files,
or hit the water, race their engines,

and vanish, struggling, eastwards. I am old
compared with them and what I lean against,
thinking about the endless lapse of fluid;
but their kind got here first. We share the world
a little, equally entranced

by sunlight: a biography of rain
is someone else's, and my rowan tree,
air-sick or earth-sick, but outliving man,
holds up its prehistoric feast again—
to the dark birds of the next century.

Michael Hulse

At Aigues-Mortes

*I should like to restore to every subject its weight
and volume, and not only paint the appearance.*

FRÉDÉRIC BAZILLE, 1868

This is the idea of a day,
this line where land and sky
defy the definition of the eye.
This is the flat extremity
of extraordinary life:
the levelled end
of the uneven privilege of hills
and the gentle unbending
of rivers and vineyards.
This is elsewhere,
the perfect unending.

Squat-solid at the open-ended scape
the massive majesty of walls,
delineating immanence: permanence

of instinct informing
impermanence of form.

The emblematic act
translates idea into fact.

Thinking of Bazille, who stood
where I stand now, knowing
that all the strange extremity
of immanence could not
atone for art's apartness, nor
restore a proper majesty
to living's dislocations,
I realise we're all the same,
crusading to a holy land
of inviolability.

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Is the German Mind Turning to “Right Extremism”?

How to Ask Loaded Questions—By KURT REUMANN



DOES frequent church attendance breed a susceptibility to Right Extremism? Are “religious ties”, together with acceptance of the moral, cultural, and political values of a “too-strict home”—along with deficiencies in upbringing and education, and with “positive experience of a nationalist-oriented immediate environment”—the “principal reasons for the survival of Extreme Right-wing attitudes in members of the War generation”? Do more than half of Germany’s Right Extremists and even half of those who sanction violence vote Christian Democrat (CDU/CSU), one in five Social Democrat (SPD), and only one in a hundred the neo-Nazi NPD?

Or is there something wrong with the investigation into *Right-Extremist Political Attitudes in the*

Federal Republic of Germany that SINUS (the Sozialwissenschaftliche Institut Nowak & Sörgel GmbH) has made for the Office of the Federal Chancellor?¹

“We haven’t invented any Right Extremists by statistical means”, says Horst Nowak in his defence. Is it really true, then, that 6% of the electorate in the Federal Republic “sanction right-wing politically motivated violence including acts of terrorism against people”? Do 13% of the electorate have “an ideologically coherent Right-Extremist view of life”? And are a further 37% of the electorate, though indifferent to Militarism, *Führer*-worship, and anti-Semitism, susceptible none the less to “other right-extremist ideas”? In short, does every second German already see himself (again?) in a brown or at least a brownish shirt?²

Whatever criticisms may be made of the SINUS study, we must beware of underestimating the extent of Right Extremism. In May 1955 the Allensbach Institute polled a representative cross-section of the West German population with the question:

“Everything that had been built up between 1933 and 1939 and a great deal more besides was destroyed by the War. Would you say that, without the War, Hitler would have been one of Germany’s greatest statesmen?”

Almost half (48%) answered, “Yes, he would.” Only something over a third (36%) replied, “No, he would not.” Admittedly the proportion of affirmative replies has been falling steadily; in

KURT REUMANN is an editor of the most important West German daily newspaper, the liberal-conservative “*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.” (A previous article by him, on “Murder & Secret Pleasures”, appeared in the October 1977 ENCOUNTER.) The official report which he subjects here to withering analysis has been widely reported in the world press, more often than not (as in the “*International Herald Tribune*”) uncritically. One suspects that it is being used to justify a parti-pris ideological position which argues, as in the recent formula of Dr Ralf Dahrendorf, that “the danger to democracy can only come from the Right. . . .” The hard fact of the matter is that democratic institutions and values (including national independence) are endangered at home and abroad by totalitarians of the Left and the Right; and little is gained for the cause of liberty by manipulated exaggerations or tendentious understatements.

M.J.L.

¹ The report of the SINUS Institute was completed in October 1980, but the public only came to hear of it through a report in *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), 16 March 1981.

² Horst Nowak, letter to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 April. The statistics are taken from the SINUS report, wherein 13% of the electorate “have a closed (or complete) Right-Extreme world-view”, and 37% are held to be “susceptible (*anfällig*)” to Extreme Right ways-of-thought.” For another interpretation see Rolf Zundel, “Keine Gefahr von rechts?”, in *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), 8 May.

November 1978 as many as 55% were already saying that under no circumstances would Hitler have been one of Germany's greatest statesmen. Yet there were still 31% who thought that, but for the War, he would have been.

"Someone says to you that the National-Socialist state was an unconstitutional state, a criminal régime. Given what you now know or what you personally experienced of the Hitler period, would you say that that was true, it was an unconstitutional state, a criminal régime? Or can one not say that?"

To this sharply-worded question in a 1964 Allensbach poll 54% replied in the affirmative; in 1977 it was already 60%, and by late 1978 almost three-quarters (71%). Only one in five still thought in 1978, "No, one can't say that."

Also in 1978 (after nearly thirty years of the West German Federal Republic), 71% of the population described "the democracy we have in West Germany" as "*The best form of government.*" But 37% believed that "*the Third Reich would not have been a bad thing at all*" had it not been for "*the War and the persecution of the Jews.*" Of the 40% who said that the Third Reich "*would have been a bad thing whatever happened*", 76%, i.e. three-quarters, described democracy as the best form of government, yet 66% or two-thirds of those who saw some good in the National-Socialist régime also said democracy was the best form of government. The Allensbach Institute commented:

"Clearly we must start by saying that the attitude that looks outwardly like justification of and sympathy for National Socialism is not to be equated with a National-Socialist, Fascist attitude as such but that only relatively indistinct tendencies point in that direction. . . ."³

The advantage of the Allensbach figures is that they record developments over a long period. But they relate to a few questions only. The Munich-based SINUS Institute cannot draw comparisons over that sort of period. It does, however, present a broad study with whole batteries of questions covering the period from May 1979 to April 1980.

THE SINUS TEAM began by combing the literature of the Extreme Right, from leaflets to books, for assertions that could be regarded as typical of Right-Extremist thinking. The institute further conducted a total of 45 psychological in-depth interviews with "confirmed" Right-wing radicals and with *Anfälligen*—susceptibles. The

resulting 160 hours of tape-recordings were erased, on completion of the relevant analyses, in the interests of confidentiality. This part of the investigation, therefore, is unfortunately no longer available.

The material from the content analysis and the in-depth interviews formed the basis of two scales: the "Right-Extremist attitudes scale" and the "Right-Extremist protest-potential scale." SINUS further drew up an "authoritarian attitudes scale." The key statements that make up these scales were put to a representative cross-section of the West German electorate (excluding West Berlin). The sample was an unusually large one—6,968 persons—in order that the Right Extremists filtered out from it might be said to be representative. The interviews were conducted not by SINUS itself but by *Infratest*, in the context of a multi-topic poll. The enormous cost involved suggests that the client—namely, the Federal Chancellor's Office—was anxious to have the fullest information possible. Nevertheless the result is unsatisfactory. The fault lies in the scales and in the incautious or even careless interpretation of the findings.

THE "RIGHT-EXTREMIST ATTITUDES SCALE", intended to reflect how Right Extremists think, consists of 24 statements (of which the study gives 23). These key statements are supposed to stand for five "factors" summarising Right-Extremist thinking.

(1) The "reactionary view of people" (*reaktionäres Menschenbild*) factor was examined by means of four statements:

- (a) *The trade unions should not be given more say in the economy.*
- (b) *We should have another Führer who would rule Germany with an iron hand for the good of everyone.*
- (c) *The reintroduction of labour camps would automatically restore law and order.*
- (d) *Homosexuality is unnatural and should be severely punished.*

Particularly (a) but also (b) are questions one would not expect under the heading of a reactionary view of Man or Mankind. Surely more appropriate to this category would be such statements as "Women must be subordinated to men" or "Jews and/or Negroes are inferior or subhuman (*Untermenschen*)."

(2) The second factor is the feeling of being threatened (particularly by foreign immigration). The relevant direct statement—"The Federal Republic is already in danger of being swamped (*überfremdet*) by its large immigrant population"—was again dropped by the SINUS Institute from the list of key statements to be examined, obviously because not only Right Extremists fear this. This left three assertions:

³ Report of the *Institut für Demoskopie* (Allensbach, 1979), p.107. This was a study of the "foundations of democracy in Germany" on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the *Bundesrepublik*.

- (a) *The forces of nationalism are suppressed in the present-day Federal Republic.*
- (b) *We have the Americans to thank for the mess we are in at present.*
- (c) *If things go on like this, our nation is fast heading for an appalling catastrophe.*

But what are “things”? The question could hardly be more vague. And if you think you have to formulate matters in such imprecise terms because Right Extremists have no clear political ideas, then you cannot go on to claim that those answering in the affirmative have “an ideologically coherent Right-Extremist view of life.” Does such a thing even exist? The in-depth interviews ought to have put the SINUS team on their guard:

“Particularly [the study notes] in the case of younger interviewees, however, besides a propensity for authoritarian aggression, a vague feeling of being threatened, and a corresponding defensiveness, there is usually clear evidence of problems of self-respect and identity in association with powerful desires for security and identification.”

That is not “a view of life”, a *Weltbild*.

Nor is a coherent framework of attitudes and behaviour something that many older people with a tendency to Right-Extremist ways of thinking possess (simple because in the process of reorientation following the War they changed their behaviour but not their old attitudes, at least not all of them).

It is by no means invariably the case that attitudes change first and behaviour afterwards; it can also happen the other way round. One such behavioural change is, obviously, that many people with Right-Extremist ideas vote for democratic parties. The view that democracy is “the best form of government” may not infrequently represent a change of attitude in line with that change of behaviour but still in contradiction to other attitudes that remain unchanged. An attitude structure whose components do not quite fit together is something that, in the main, less intelligent people possess; and there is not one investigation that does not show that Right Extremists tend to be of below-average education.

Nation, Fatherland, & Family

THE RIGHT-EXTREMIST ATTITUDES SCALE also includes the statement, “*National-Socialism [Nazism] was bad for the German people from the outset.*” Complete agreement with this assertion, which implies that National-Socialism had a negative effect even before the War, rates 4 on the SINUS scale; complete disagreement rates 1. One would

have assumed that the views of Right Extremists would give a reading somewhere between 1 and 2. Not a bit of it. Both those whom SINUS had filtered out as Right Extremists and those whom the team regarded as advocating Right-Extremist violence gave a mean reading of 2.4. This finding appears only in the appendix to the study.

Yet the authors ought to have discussed this inconsistency. It reflects the inconsistency of Right-Extremist attitudes. It also points to a further problem of method. SINUS proceeded empirically. The team sought to ascertain to which attitudes Right Extremists most readily give full assent. But the reverse conclusion, that all who agree with most of the statements are also dyed-in-the-wool Right Extremists, is hazardous and methodologically suspect. And the same criticism can be made of the statements relating to the other factors. The third factor seeks to measure desire for harmony and aversion to pluralism. Factor 4 is supposed to show evidence of an exaggerated respect for *Volk, Vaterland, und Familie*. But the statement, “*There is nothing more important than the security provided in the bosom of a well-ordered family*” has again been dropped—obviously because it does not possess the requisite power of distinction. Instead the key statement, “*Abortion should be severely punished because Germany urgently needs more children*”, has to fill the bill as far as characterising the Right-Extremist view of the family is concerned. That is a loaded question, however, and constitutes a trap; a not inconsiderable proportion of the statements selected by the SINUS Institute constitute such traps. The question is whether the trapper has in fact got the game he was after. This particular double-pronged trap might well have caught less intelligent members of the Roman Catholic Church.

Factor 5 is aimed at the “Siegfried complex”, the virility mania that is heightened by nationalistic self-conceit and reinforced by wholesale transference of everything evil and decadent on to imagined enemies. An assertion characteristic of such a way of thinking would be, “*The Germans are more decent and more industrious than any other nation. . . .*” Instead the following statements were chosen:

- (a) *The Federal government is a puppet régime ruling by courtesy of America.*
- (b) *Our people are being systematically misled by left-wing journalists in radio and television.* [This trap would probably catch mainly CDU/CSU supporters.]
- (c) *Jews and Freemasons wield enormous influence in our country even today.*

Actually one would not expect such traps to be used in the hunt for militant Right Extremists but only in the search for “susceptibles”, who are harder to identify.

Clearly if one wants to stop Right Extremists becoming more influential one would need to know what “bridges” exist between them and other sections of the population. This is why SINUS drew up their “authoritarian attitudes scale.”⁴ It comprises eight statements.

(a) *The Germans possess a series of good qualities such as diligence, a sense of duty, and loyalty that other nations do not possess.*

(b) *I think the bourgeoisie—i.e. businessmen, artisans, and farmers—should be the mainstay of our state.*

Not the “middle class”, that is to say, but the self-employed class, which also includes the professions, e.g. doctors. Yet the examples given are all from the small-business sector. And “the mainstay”, notice, rather than “one of the mainstays.” But who, answering a poll, is going to bother about such subtleties? (Another trap for CDU/CSU supporters.)

(c) *Atomic radiation is endangering our genes and consequently the health of future generations.*

But atomic radiation is a danger of a different order than the “contamination of racial purity” by foreign immigration. Fear of changes in our genetic make-up is not a valid sign of susceptibility to Right Extremism. The question, like so many others, does not measure what it purports to measure.

TAKE (g), FOR EXAMPLE: “*Everything is changing so fast nowadays that one often doesn’t know which way to turn.*” This assertion is nothing like specific enough to get at the inability of the authoritarian type of person to handle the complexity of industrialised society.⁵ The “basic values of the West”, writes the Berlin professor Richard Lowenthal (in *Was sind Grundwerte?*)⁶—and he means the belief in common sense, the emphasis on

the value of the individual, the impulse towards self-improvement, the commitment to a civic association freely entered into, the sense of responsibility to that community under the rule of law, the positive acceptance of work and of the plurality of values and ideologies—these basic values, writes Lowenthal, unleashed a dynamic so powerful that social conditions have changed over and over again in the history of the West and left traditional standards no longer appropriate to the reality of the situation.

The assimilation of social change in continuity with basic values is the key (according to Lowenthal) to whether civilised cooperation is maintained or whether it will collapse and a situation arise that the French sociologist Durkheim called *anomie*—an absence of standards in which the individual can no longer find his way around. This kind of culture crisis, in which standards have not yet succeeded in adapting to change, is what others besides Richard Lowenthal consider that we are experiencing in our century. To say that extremists, with their noisy offers of spurious certainties, are capitalising on people’s confusion as to which way to turn is quite correct. What is mistaken is to say that only Right-Wing Extremists are doing this.

(h) “*Whether or not I express a political opinion isn’t going to change things much.*” This and similarly worded statements (as other institutes have already demonstrated) are designed to reveal the disturbed nature of the parliamentary relationship between a great many voters and their elected representatives. This feeling of impotence, which (whether justified or not) is widespread among both old and young, both the politically interested and the politically apathetic, paralyses any readiness to do anything. Extremists are able to make capital out of this too and offer some kind of outlet. But again we must add the rider: not only Right Extremists but also the radical Left. At the moment it looks rather as if the extreme Left has been exerting the greater attraction. And this evidently is the very impression that the SINUS study seeks to refute: but with tricks. . . .

The Dangers of Violence

THE FIGURES PUBLISHED hitherto regarding the extent of the Right-Extremist protest potential need to be “marked up considerably”, SINUS contends. Quantitatively the figure for Right-Extremist “latent approval of violence”—6% of the electorate—is “equal if not superior to” that among Left Extremists.⁷

The tendency to violence among the Right-Extremist protest potential is described by SINUS as follows:

⁴ This whole scheme is strongly influenced by the ideas and techniques of the Adorno-Horkheimer school, especially T. W. Adorno’s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950).

⁵ The Scheuch-Klingemann study of “The Theory of Right Radicalism in Western Industrial Societies” is in *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik* (1967).

⁶ The study of “basic values”, “*Was sind Grundwerte?*”, edited by Otto Kimminich, is in Vol. 80 of the Bavarian Catholic Academy’s publications (1977), and includes Richard Lowenthal’s contribution (pp. 45–52).

⁷ *Infratest*, in a 1979 study for the Federal Ministry of the Interior, recorded a “Left-wing protest potential” of 4.4%; of those polled by *Infratest* on its own account, 1.5% put themselves on the Extreme Right. It is on the basis of this study that the SINUS team make their comparisons.

"Violence—to the point of the physical elimination of the 'enemy'—is a characteristic feature of Right-Extremist thought and action. The almost mythological veneration of violence and the unshakeable belief in its conflict-resolving, 'purifying' power typify the dangerous nature of neo-Nazi terrorism in the Federal Republic. The forms of concrete violent action and the number of victims can in fact be of any kind or size, a question of tactical calculation, because in Right-Extremist thinking there are no ethical or moral bounds to cruelty. Random killings such as in Munich or attacks on refugee accommodation are, therefore, quite in line with the dreadful 'logic' of Right-Extremist violence. They are not a peripheral phenomenon but a direct consequence."

However, the proof that 6% of the German electorate obey this dreadful "logic" is not something the SINUS team provides. Its "Right-Extremist protest-potential scale" comprises eight statements.

- (a) "A Day of German Unity" (17 June) demonstration on the German Democratic Republic frontier.
- (b) Common protest with like-minded people against the anti-German concentration-camp reports.
- (c) Concerted disturbance of a clearly Communist-organised meeting.
- (d) Public burning of pornographic and Bolshevik literature.
- (e) Neutralisation of East German fortifications on the Wall and on transit routes when opportunities arise.
- (f) Demonstrative pulling-down of the East German DDR flag, for example at international sporting events in the West German Federal Republic.
- (g) Smoking out left-wing bookshops together with determined comrades.
- (h) Concerted actions against installations and personnel of the Allied armies of occupation.

One would, I think, need to examine how far this is an "anti-Communist" rather than a "Right-Extremist" scale. In terms of method it is supposed to be a Guttman scale: in other words a person answering the last statement in the affirmative ought also to applaud all the preceding ones. But it is far from certain that, for example, someone who would neutralise DDR fortifications on the Berlin Wall when an opportunity offered itself would also burn pornographic and Bolshevik literature.

Two of the eight statements are concerned only with demonstrations—without violence; two involve acquiescence in disturbances but not actual destruction; three concern violence against things. So in seven out of eight statements there is no ques-

tion of violence against human beings. Hence, when a person scores an agreement rate in excess of 2.5 (on a scale from 1-to-4) and is classified by the SINUS Institute as someone who applauds Right-wing terrorist violence, he may well not have agreed with the eighth statement. And not even this last statement speaks of violence against human beings leading to their death. It talks about "concerted actions" against the Allied armies of occupation, including their personnel. Are we then, really justified in concluding from this that "random killings" involving x numbers of victims fall within the calculations of 6% of the German electorate?

I would think not. Such a conclusion would not be justified even if the scale measured readiness-to-commit-violent-acts. But, as the SINUS research team admit, it is only meant to record approval of violence. It is incapable even of doing that. We must, to be sure, allow for a connection between approval of violence and readiness to commit it. In the case of "susceptibles", propensity to violence increases when they feel they are in the company of like-minded people who sanction violent acts. If it is not the majority that approves, it must be a minority that can be assumed to be on the way up. This is not the case as far as Right Extremists are concerned. They have been and still are isolated.

WHILE LEFT-WING radicalism is more widespread among young people than among old, with Right Extremism it is the other way round. SINUS also found that "all age groups below 40 show above-average resistance to Right-Extremist ideology." Young Right Extremists, then, have almost no sympathisers among those of their own age. And the older Right Extremists, most of whom belong to the War generation (age-groups over 55), take little part in public debate. So they influence the climate of German opinion to an even lesser extent than their numbers would be capable of doing; in the mass media they find no echo at all.

Anyone who (the Allensbach Institute, for example) is able to bring a time-dimension into the analysis will have thought only a few years ago that it was simply a matter of time before Right Extremism disappeared, with the old dying a natural death and their Right-Extremist ideas passing with them. The number of Right Extremists is indeed declining. But the number of organised Right Extremists rose by 2,500 last year to reach a total of 19,800, including about 1,800 neo-Nazis; and the number of violent acts committed by Right Extremists is also going up—clearly because the relatively few young Right Extremists are far more militant than before. This is something that gives us all real cause for concern. But with its weaknesses of method, the SINUS study is not qualified to

reinforce that concern. Its vaguely-based alarmism can only confuse and confound a sober and realistic analysis.

This is something that gives cause for concern, particularly since it lowers one's hopes that Right Extremists will eventually become extinct.

It was prompted by this concern that the Federal Chancellor's Office commissioned this costly survey. *Der Spiegel* and the *Deutsche Allgemeine Sonntagsblatt* accused the Chancellor's Office of withholding the SINUS findings on the grounds that they were "too explosive." In fact, as we have seen, the reason for their being withheld may have been the fear that, with its faulty methods, the survey did little to clarify the situation. It is interesting that both of these weeklies (as well as the Social-Democratic *Vorwärts*) accepted and published the findings of the survey *without* any criticism of its methods. By contrast, *Der Spiegel* subjects surveys of the dangers of Left-wing Radicalism—quite justifiably—to the most rigorous methodological criticism. Indeed, anyone seeking to take a critical look at the methods used in any survey of Right-wing Radicalism is immediately suspected of trying "to play down" the threat from the Right.

This pressure from the media is partly to blame for the oddly contradictory statements regarding Right Extremism issued by the "Office for the Protection of the Constitution." One moment it represents "no threat"—the next moment they are saying how very dangerous it is. Whereas not long ago politicians from both sides of the government coalition (*SPD* and *FDP*) were saying that there could be no question of stiffer sentences for extremism unless they penalised Right and Left equally, it now looks increasingly as if the Federal Ministry of Justice is working on a tightening-up of the law as it affects Right-wing Radicalism alone.⁸

Vital as it is that we remain constantly on our guard against the slightest danger from the Right, we should be equally scrupulous about not exaggerating Right Extremism for purely tactical reasons—to divert attention from other dangers, for example. We must pay closer attention to what radicalisms of Right and Left have in common. It is not often pointed out that nationalist-oriented Left-Extremist *K-Gruppen* and organisations on the extreme Right enjoy a certain interchange of

membership,⁹ though it is not known how large this is. But the more dangerous correlation seems to be that acts of terrorism by the Left release (spontaneously and usually only for a short period) Right-Extremist ideas and opinions.

Every time a political assassination occurs there is an increase in the number of people who want "a strong man at the helm."¹⁰ The same is true of the demand for the reintroduction of the death penalty: when a child or a taxi-driver is murdered the proportion of those advocating the *Todesstrafe* quickly rises to over half the population. But before long it sinks back to between a third and a quarter.

The methodological lesson to be learned from this is that the degree of prevalence of extremist ideas and opinions is largely dependent upon the political situation at the time. The political lesson is that all forms of extremism must be fought against—and not only those of the ideological Right and Left. Moreover, the fight must be pursued steadily and soberly: not with hysterical exaggeration when a terrorist crime has just been committed, and not sloppily and soporifically when things happen to appear calm. On a personal level we need to take note (from poll data from the Allensbach Institute and also from the Mannheim Research Group) that the fight must begin with ourselves—against ourselves. For which of us is innocent, in crisis situations, of a tendency to emotional exaggeration?

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⁸ See, for the various interpretations: Werner A. Perger, *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt* (22 March); Peter Kutschke, *Vorwärts* (2 April); Rolf Zundel, *Die Zeit* (8 May); Friedrich Karl Fromme, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (14 May).

⁹ The conversation with a young National-Socialist ("without going so far as to say that I'm the new Führer") is in the Left-wing *Kursbuch* (No. 54, December 1978), pp. 127–41.

¹⁰ The report of the "electoral research group" is a 1977 study of West German politics, made for the Second German TV channel.

SCIENCE

Psychiatry's Second Coming

The Way We Analyse Now—By WALTER REICH



AMERICAN PSYCHIATRY is in ideological flux. A tradition seems about to be toppled—more ingloriously, shed—and a new one, raw and robust, about to take its place. The psychiatry that has been familiar to America for the better part of the century has been pronounced “impractical, a failure, an embarrassment.”

The established professional approach—the environmentalist one; the one that has concerned itself almost exclusively with the influence of the external environment on development and behaviour; that has focused on individual psychology, on childhood, on the search for unconscious motivations, on psychoanalysis, on psychotherapy, on the primacy of feeling and meaning and growing, on Freud—is rapidly being abandoned. And a new approach—a biological one, centred on the brain, on neurochemistry, on pharmacology, on medications—is rapidly gaining adherents, not only among psychiatrists, but also in the press, among the public, and within a population of newly hopeful and expectant patients.

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His report on the American re-examination of Major-General Pyotr Grigorenko (the dissident who had been declared mentally ill and committed to Soviet prison hospitals for the criminally insane) appeared in the April 1980 issue of ENCOUNTER.

Some American psychiatrists, particularly those in the environmentalist camp, deny that any changes are taking place at all; or that those changes represent anything important—certainly not a significant challenge to the truth and usefulness of the traditional psychiatric concepts and practices. Others feel angry, at least perplexed, about the increasing power of “biologism” and the rush of younger psychiatrists to embrace it. And still others, the biological psychiatrists themselves, feel that their time has rightfully come: that their ascendance is, simply, an appropriate and direct result of the truths they bear, the science, the knowledge. They interpret their growing strength as a recognition that their explanations for abnormalities of feeling and thinking and being are more correct than the purely psychological ones, that in explaining those human functions in chemical terms they have finally and successfully brought together the Mind and the Body, and that the understanding of human behaviour in health, as well as its therapy in illness, will ultimately be achieved most quickly and most fully through their methods of research and through their approaches to treatment.

The fact itself—the decline of the psychological, the environmental, and the rise of the biological, the chemical—is verified in every sphere of the American psychiatric enterprise, as well as in those fields and activities outside of psychiatry that have borrowed from it.

The popular books being written on psychoanalysis and Freud—which for years demonstrated Lenin’s apocryphal dictum that a scholar who studies a subject becomes its apologist—have grown critical of late, questioning assumptions about not only the origins of the movement but also the validity of its claims and theories.¹ Literary

¹ Numerous adulatory and uncritical biographical explications have appeared, the most influential, magisterial and orthodox of which has been *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* by Ernest Jones (3 vols. 1953–57). Recent studies have attempted to undo some of the Freud myth, demolishing much religious iconography (but revealing, at the same time, aspects of Freud’s genius that in painting their frescoes his devotees had found uninteresting or inconvenient). For the most successful and important demythologising study, see Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* (1979).

figures, historians and public commentators, who regularly relied on psychoanalytic theory to provide insights into matters of art, politics and history, have found other sources of inspiration and interpretation. In the halcyon days of psychopolitics and psychohistory, otherwise circumspect non-psychiatrists embraced without question the synoptic prospects that Freud envisioned in *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926):

"For we do not consider it at all desirable for psychoanalysis to be swallowed up by medicine and to find its last resting-place in a text-book of psychiatry under the heading 'Methods of Treatment', alongside of procedures such as hypnotic suggestion, auto-suggestion, and persuasion, which, born from our ignorance, have to thank the laziness and cowardice of mankind for their short-lived effects. It deserves a better fate and, it may be hoped, will meet with one. As a depth-psychology, a theory of the mental unconscious, it can become indispensable to all the sciences which are concerned with the evolution of human civilization and its major institutions such as art, religion and the social order. It has already, in my opinion, afforded these sciences considerable help in solving their problems. But these are only small contributions compared with what might be achieved if historians of civilization, psychologists of religion, philologists and so on would agree themselves to handle the new instrument of research which is at their service."

Freud's Works (ed. Strachey), vol. 20, p. 248.

That "instrument of research" was indeed accepted into service, often in wholesale fashion, across the

entire range of intellectual activity. Even luminaries with a firm foot on hard reality, e.g. Walter Lippmann and Harold Lasswell, felt the psychoanalytic tug. A succession of others produced full-scale psychohistories patterned on Freud's own psychologically overstated or factually flawed studies, such as those of Moses and Leonardo da Vinci. The reaction, though, has set in. Anti-psychohistory has emerged as a profession in itself.²

THE NUMBER OF HOURS spent by patients in psychoanalysis, as well as the number of psychiatrists applying to psychoanalytic institutes as trainees (1965: 367; 1978: 255), has declined. Articulate medical and pre-medical students, who for decades saw in psychoanalysis an arena conducive to the expression of their verbal or humanistic gifts, as well as a refuge from the practical and often rote world of medicine, have discovered outlets other than de-psychoanalysed psychiatry for their talents and needs.

Thus, a decade ago, 8–10% of American medical students chose psychiatry as a career; about 3% do so now. The decline is probably (as Freud might have said) over-determined. When psychoanalysis and other "psychodynamic" environmentalistic therapies still dominated American psychiatry, a number of those who chose medicine as a career probably did so precisely in order to become psychiatrists, some having been smitten by the psychoanalytic classics they had read during their university studies (e.g. *Civilization and Its Discontents* or *The Interpretation of Dreams*). With psychoanalysis on the decline, such students may now be choosing other professions than medicine. In addition, medicine is becoming increasingly scientific in general. Medical school admission committees seem less inclined to accept applicants whose interest in medicine is characterised more by "humanism" than by a robust record of achievement in scientific courses. And, ironically, those students who are already in Medical School are now faced with a psychiatry that is, in its biologism, more scientific than before.

One result is that those who are humanistically inclined—who insist on treating the "Whole Person" as a doctor rather than individual organs as a specialist—prefer to enter family practice, social activism, or even government administration. Those whose bent is more technical and scientific, who prefer precision and "hard" data, tend, in the main, to enter those specialities in which science has a firmer and more established hold, such as internal medicine.

The scientific papers published in the major professional journals³ and presented at the most important professional congresses, as well as the

² Most recently and tellingly in David Stannard's *Shrinking History: On Freud and the Failure of Psychohistory* (Oxford University Press, 1980). Other abandonments of Freudian theory—which, Paul Roazen once observed, had achieved its widespread popularity among intellectuals in part because it served to "fill the gap" left by intellectuals' disenchantment with Marx (*Freud: Political and Social Thought*, 1968, pp. 5–6)—have proceeded apace in such diverse fields as literary criticism, social science, and art history. Ironically, those abandonments of psychoanalysis outside psychiatry, coupled with its partial abandonment inside the profession, seem to have brought closer to reality Freud's early fear that psychoanalysis might become a moribund medical method, vaguely remembered, and interred in psychiatric text-books alongside "hypnotic suggestion, autosuggestion, and persuasion."

³ The *American Journal of Psychiatry* (the official journal of the American Psychiatric Association) has undergone what Evelyn Myers, its managing editor, described to me as "a dramatic shift in the biological direction" since she joined its staff 15 years ago. The results of a similar shift are evident also in the pages of the other major American psychiatric journal, the *Archives of General Psychiatry* (published by the American Medical Association), which is now even more heavily devoted than is the other journal to studies of a biological nature.

books published in the field, are increasingly of a biological nature. The therapies dispensed by psychiatrists, as compared to two decades ago, are much more pharmaceutical.⁴ University departments of psychiatry are recruiting ever more faculty members from biology's expanding ranks. And government funds for research into the causes and treatments of the mental illnesses are being spent to a lesser and lesser degree, proportionately, on purely psychological matters, and to a greater and greater degree on biological ones.⁵

But the turn in psychiatry from environmentalism to biologism, evident as it has been, is still unexplained.

Some have attributed it to changes in fashion, an attribution applied equally to the analogous abandonment of "depth-psychology" by historians and literary critics. Others have felt that what has happened in clinical psychiatry has had quite different origins. It has had to do not with matters of fashion, but rather with the sudden recognition among psychiatrists that, even as a *clinical* enterprise, psychoanalysis and the approaches derived from it are neither scientific nor effective. But while psychoanalysis and other environmentalistic methods may indeed lack both science and effectiveness—and while biological understandings and treatments may indeed be based on more convincing and reliable grounds—the reasons for the clinical shift have little to do, I

think, with the recognition of scientific breakthroughs or the evaluation of therapeutic successes. Or, to be more exact, when it comes to professional ideologies and clinical beliefs—to the acceptance or rejection of one or another approach to psychiatric knowledge and truth—such breakthroughs and successes are, in the main, beside the point.

In what psychiatrists believe about their clinical work, in what they say and in what they do, they are influenced far more, I think, by need and emotion than by philosophy or science. How psychiatrists conceptualise what is wrong with patients and what made them that way, and how they go about trying to help them get better, is determined more by historical, cultural, and professional forces than by the data of research or the progress of knowledge.

FOR THE PSYCHIATRISTS working in America during the past three or four decades, the overriding professional theme, the very motor of action and identity, has been the search for optimism.

Drawing upon the legacy of the national experience, and upon the success of its first century-and-a-half of transatlantic endeavour, a success capped, finally, by the USA's emergence from the Second World War as the strongest, cleanest, healthiest society on earth, American psychiatrists applied what they saw as the lessons of that success to their field and to their work. American history seemed to be characterised by a process of self-overcoming, by the rejection of European notions of stasis and class, and by an abiding belief in self-improvement and self-renovation through virtue and hard work. In that spirit, American psychiatrists rejected clinical attitudes that were typically, classically European, that reeked of stasis and pessimism; and they became hospitable to approaches that were consistent with a native optimism, approaches that gave that optimism theoretical articulation and practical expression. They swept their professional house clean of the teachings spawned by 19th-century Europe and exported whole to American shores—the teachings that had dominated American universities, hospitals and practitioners through the early years of the present century. They dislodged the psychiatry that was based on biological determinism; on the assumption that psychiatric disease is simply, directly, and inevitably a behavioural expression of brain disease; on hereditary notions of personality, capacity and pathology; on the ethos of individual limitation, of congenital fate, of therapeutic pessimism.

A therapeutically more hopeful professional ideology, more consistent with a need for a belief in self-overcoming and self-renewal, replaced that

⁴ According to Mitchell Balter (chief of the psychopharmacology research branch of the National Institute of Mental Health), the rise in prescriptions for antidepressant medications has been threefold since 1964, and for antipsychotic agents about 35%. The rise in prescriptions for the "minor tranquillisers" (or anti-anxiety agents), for years the most widely used of the psychotherapeutic medications, has been especially striking, going from about 45 million in 1964 to a high of 104 million in 1973. The overall rise in prescriptions for psychotherapeutic drugs also reached its peak in that year, at about 212 million, from about 122 million eleven years before. These figures, compiled in the *National Disease and Therapeutic Index*, are for prescriptions written by all physicians, not just psychiatrists. But the figures provided for the drugs used for the major mental illnesses, the anti-depressants and the anti-psychotics, appear to reflect the prescription practices of psychiatrists especially closely.

⁵ This trend was already evident during the mid-1970s (see Julius Segal, ed., *Research in the Service of Mental Health: Report of the Research Task Force of the National Institute of Mental Health*, Washington, D.C., US Government Printing Office, 1975). It has accelerated since then. The National Institute of Mental Health's own laboratories—by far the world's largest complex of human and material resources devoted to the study of mental illness, which some two decades ago subsidised its investigators in their psychoanalytic training and organised extensive programmes to study the relationships between family environment and schizophrenia (a relationship then assumed by many to be causal)—are now preoccupied primarily with investigations of drugs, neurochemistry, and psychogenetics.

catalogue of sadness, built on determinism, biologism, and geneticism. American psychiatrists discovered, and embraced, environmentalism. They became partial to ideas, born but shunned in Europe, that suggested that behaviour was *not* determined—and sealed—by hereditary taint and biological inevitability. They preferred to believe that personality can be infinitely shaped; that the brain, its biological basis, is a plenipotential organ, a *tabula rasa*; that what we become and how we differ from each other is almost solely a result of what we experience; and that what we experience is, in turn, a reflection, a function, of our environment. They became especially hospitable to theories involving the very earliest environment, the first few years after birth, theories that focused on traumatic episodes, on pathological constellations, on development gone awry.

Such theories were, to be sure, also deterministic. But they involved a kind of determinism that seemed consistent with an optimism about the capacity of human beings to change and to become healthy, and with a need among psychiatrists to see themselves as capable of facilitating such renovation. Those theories involved, in other words, a determinism that was susceptible to professional interventions—interventions at the very beginning of life in the form of preventive rearrangements that would remove from the child's environment developmentally noxious influences; or interventions later in life in the form of the painful, patient, reconstructive "undoing" of psychoanalysis or of psychotherapy.

IT DIDN'T HAVE to be that way. America's environmentalism could have taken another turn. In Russia, for example, during the 1920s and early '30s, environmentalism *did* take another turn.

Marxist ideology insisted, and the Revolution was built, on another kind of optimism, an even more ambitious kind—on the idea that both society and human nature were determined by historical process as expressed through the economic, cultural and social forces that made up the environment. Soviet psychologists and psychiatrists quickly grasped what this idea, this ideology, meant for them. They saw that it implied a social environmentalism; and they saw that their role in espousing it—and their usefulness for the society and for the Revolution—lay in elaborating the implications of that idea for human behaviour and for their own professional role in intervening in the aberrations of human behaviour.

The Party ideologists argued that Soviet society was not limited by its legacy of Czarist backwardness. It could overcome that backwardness and reshape itself by reshaping Soviet man—and Soviet man could be reshaped by

a reshaping of his social environment. Within Soviet psychology and psychiatry, schools arose that generated one theory after another that were consistent with that hopeful ideology. In psychology, for example, there were specific, quite crude theories regarding the effects of socio-environmental conditions on discrete types of human behaviour. And in psychiatry there was an energetic positive mental health movement, a spawning, during the 1920s, of "social psychohygiene" programmes dedicated to the task of "prevention." It involved the banishment of the idea that individuals were born with different intellectual capacities; a rejection of genetics; a focusing on society as the sole shaper of personality and as the sole determinant of mental illness; and an exorcism of the notion that the mentally ill were beyond salvation.

In the end, Soviet environmentalism consumed itself. By the mid-1930s, it became clear that it was promising more than it could deliver. It had suggested that Soviet society, through the process of self-renovation, would renovate its members, strengthening them psychologically and curing them psychiatrically. That did not happen. Worse: after two decades of socialism there was still mental illness; and the idea of socially-caused illnesses springing up in a wholly new generation of Soviet citizens implied that the social causes of mental

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illness were still present, had not been eradicated by the Revolution, and could not be attributed to the vestiges of "Czarist feudalism" and "exploitative capitalism." Diagnoses such as "Soviet exhaustion", invented to describe the psychiatric conditions of hard-working cadres, began to seem subversive. Like so many other sciences and professions of the Stalin era, psychology and psychiatry suffered severely during the late 1930s—psychology disappearing altogether, and psychiatry burrowing itself deep into the body of medicine, donning a white coat, and becoming again, as it once had been, biological.

NOT THAT ALL of those ideas were inherently wrong or absurd. Social environmentalism expressed something that is probably true about the determination of human behaviour. Man is surely "a product of his society", at least in part. That the Soviet brand of environmentalism exhausted itself was not necessarily proof of its intellectual or scientific impoverishment. To be sure, its intellectual foundation was weak and its scientific basis was impoverished. But those defects were inevitable, given the insistent expectations of the Party ideologists for a uniquely optimistic Soviet approach to human behaviour and the repeated attempts by the psychologists and psychiatrists—probably quite sincere at the beginning—to generate theories and approaches that would satisfy those expectations.

IN A WAY, American psychiatry now finds itself in a similar predicament. Certainly, the pressures, expectations, and professional responses that marked the formative years of the Soviet behavioural sciences were far more intense than anything experienced in the United States. But in its intensity the Soviet experience is instructive. It puts into stark perspective the dangers of ideological zeal in psychiatry, the profession's preference for wishful thinking to scientific knowledge, and the backlash that is provoked, perhaps inevitably, when the zeal devours the ideology and the wish banishes the science.

The hopefulness that characterised American individualistic environmentalism, the optimism of its theoreticians, and the promises of its practitioners have, finally, brought it disrepute, some of it deserved. It was, really, silly for American psy-

chiatrists to reject everything biological; and it was naive for them to believe that all ills, from neuroses to psychoses, from character disorders to medical disorders, and from individual psychology to political and social phenomena, were susceptible to psychoanalytic interventions. Perhaps some are; certainly some are not. But some American psychiatrists truly believed that they all were (a few still do); and for a long time the profession broadcast such ideas to a public that wanted to hear them and had the same optimism—indeed, acquired it from the same culture—and made psychiatry, or at least some psychiatrists, into its intellectual priests. Many in the profession enjoyed that role, were flattered by it, and fostered it even if their own belief in its truth and in its promise had flagged.

WHAT HAS RESULTED, it now appears, is a kind of disintegration of American psychiatry into disparate, angry, and perplexed camps.

Some still keep to the faith and believe in it, either because they have found nothing with which to replace it or because they have been able to renew it, despite the pressure of the biological challenge, and to convince themselves of its ultimate worth. Others in the profession have rejected the old faith altogether. They have fastened upon theories and therapies that focus not on the environment of childhood, or on the family, but on the environment of the moment, and reject, sometimes with a vengeance, all individuals other than the self. Those approaches—such as *est*, *T.M.*, and Primal Scream, as well as some 250 others—appear on the psychological scene with regularity, spreading from the West of the land to its East, often quite extinguished in California by the time they arrive in New York.⁶

And still other psychiatrists—those now gaining ascendance—have turned to biological psychiatry. That it has been the youngest who have done so is no accident. It takes a very special training to partake of that knowledge. You have to know neurochemistry; and for that you have to know biochemistry; and for that you have to know organic chemistry; and for that inorganic chemistry; and for that you have to go to school, and for that you have to be young. So it seems a little frightening for those who have already put in their time, who have invested in environmentalism, to see this new trend emerging.

And, more than that, it appears puzzling. Why the return of biologism? Why its sudden ascendance? Why its massive success?

OF COURSE, the new biologism can be attributed, in some measure, to scientific findings. Evidence has emerged, in recent years, finally and clearly

⁶ *Est* is the acronym for Erhard Seminars Training; *T.M.* for transcendental meditation. Other psychotherapies include encounter groups [no relation: Ed. Note], Life Spring, and psychosynthesis. For a recent compilation and description of such "new therapies", see R. Herink, *The Psychotherapy Handbook: The A-to-Z Guide to 250 Different Therapies in Use Today* (New York, New American Library, 1980).

implicating biological factors that make certain persons vulnerable to the development of certain mental illnesses, such as manic-depressive psychosis and schizophrenia. The newer biological therapies have been shown to be more effective than purely psychological ones in their treatment.⁷

In addition, the apostrophe to biologism provides the basis for a useful refurbishing of professional identity. As the only mental-health professionals who can prescribe drugs, psychiatrists can re-define themselves as being, first and foremost, physicians. In so doing, they can once again assert their superior position in the mental-health field, a position that has been assailed with increasing force and sense by psychologists, social workers, and other therapists, who have asked why psychiatrists should be granted special status if what they do is no different from what other mental-health professionals do.

Changes in political and economic conditions may have played a role in the paradigmatic shift. The environmentalist treatment approaches, whether they are effective or not, require great expenditures of time and money. The biological approaches provide, through the use of medications, a kind of "quick fix." It is one that is more consistent with a national turn towards a stricter accounting of what can be given away in a time of

scarcity and towards a more limited definition of how far society and its professionals can respond to the draining wants and limitless needs of the disabled and the distressed.

BUT THERE IS, in addition, another explanation for biologism's new success—one that is probably more powerful than any of the others.

The new biologism, ironically enough, is displacing environmentalism because it now offers the same promise that environmentalism offered decades ago—in such a grandiose way that it was bound to fail—the promise, that is, of optimism. The difference is that, now, there is hope in biology. Whereas the old geneticism had come to stand for "fascist" fantasies of inferiority and superiority, and for an ideology of limitation, stasis and incurability, the new geneticism is built on knowledge of gene action; on knowledge of the structure of genetic material; on knowledge of brain mechanism at the cellular level; and on the knowledge that some of those mechanisms and some of the processes of genetic determinism could become, in theory, manipulable—that they could indeed become susceptible to direct intervention.

Intervention! Although no genetic interventions of a psychiatric nature have yet been attempted in human beings, and none are even on the scientific horizon, at least the prospect is there. Following the failures of the more extreme environmentalist promises, American society as a whole and the professional field (at least in part) were prepared to pounce on anything that would give it hope from some other perspective. Now the potential exists, and the virile young have it. They are the bearers of the secret; they have been initiated into its chemical mysteries; and the rest of the profession is standing aside, partly in wonder, partly in hope and fear.

IN MY VIEW, those psychiatrists who are fearful probably should not be—and those who are haughty in their biological knowledge probably should not be.

Environmentalism has not been a total failure, and biologism has yet to live up to its promise. During the now-ending reign of environmentalism, something was learned, despite its over-extension. Something was learned, after all, about people—about their needs and ways of being, both in health and illness—that is true, or at least useful. Psychiatrists learned—or stumbled upon—verbal methods for dealing with disturbances of behaviour and thinking, of mood and perspective. These could be effective even if the source of the effect lies not in the words themselves, or in the special nature of the technique, but in the non-specific elements of attentiveness and caring.⁸

⁷ Colin Brewer, commenting on the decline of psychoanalysis in Britain (ENCOUNTER, July 1980), argued that it was a result of a growing scientific attitude among psychiatrists toward psychiatric theory and practice. That may well be the correct explanation in Britain, where psychoanalysis was never dominant (except, perhaps, in a few enclaves in London, notably Hampstead). In the main, British psychiatry has taken its lead from traditions established at such centres as London's Maudsley Hospital, maintaining a more or less continental character; it concerned itself with the physical causes and treatments of mental illnesses even at a time when the American profession was most powerfully seized by environmentalistic assumptions and beliefs. The difference in ideological orientation stems, I suspect, not from British psychiatry's superior wisdom—but, rather, from American psychiatry's susceptibility to America's mid-century ethos of optimism, activism and change.

⁸ Jerome Frank has argued that it is such non-specific elements—the therapist's ability, for example, to evoke in the patient a high degree of confidence in the therapy—that is the source of the healing effect of the verbal therapies; see his *Persuasion and Healing*, 2nd ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973. As to the extent of the effect, it now appears clear that it exists and is even measurable, whether or not that effect has anything to do with a particular technique or theory. See, especially, the very important and impressive new study by M. L. Smith, G. V. Glass and T. I. Miller, *The Benefits of Psychotherapy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981). It seems evident, overall, that "talking therapy", for still unknown reasons (and despite H. J. Eysenck's admonitions in 1952) helps, and helps better than no therapy at all. (For an excellent and current review of psychotherapy studies and research, see the paper by Morris B. Parloff, "Psychotherapy and Research: An Anacritic Depression", in *Psychiatry* (Vol. 43, November 1980).

It may now be necessary to drop some notions of causality, and to adjust other notions, or at least to allow room for revisions. But American psychiatrists would be wise to appreciate that, at the behavioural and verbal levels of observation and intervention, there is a shared experience that can be called knowledge—a knowledge that in its broad form lives alongside any other knowledge that may emerge from biological psychiatry. The biological

psychiatrists have something to learn from that knowledge, too, and can benefit from it, not only in their own personal developments but also in the development of their science. This seems especially pressing now. For evidence is emerging that some of the heralded biological therapies have serious limitations and drawbacks (the most worrisome of which is the neurological condition known as “tardive dyskinesia” that is caused by the prolonged use of the antipsychotic drugs used for schizophrenia).⁹

⁹ See “Tardive Dyskinesia: Summary of a Task Force Report of the American Psychiatric Association”, by the Task Force on Late Neurological Effects of Antipsychotic Drugs, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, (vol. 137, October 1980, pp. 1163–1172).

Tardive dyskinesia is characterised by involuntary and frequent movements of the tongue and facial muscles, and, sometimes, of the extremities and trunk. It occurs as a side effect in 10–20% of persons taking antipsychotic agents for extended periods of time. The recognition during the past decade that this condition is in fact not rare—and that it seems to be related to the amount of antipsychotic agents taken—may account (at least in part) for the decline since 1974, by about 25%, in the prescription of such medications.

THE PSYCHOBIOLOGISTS as well as their followers have, I suggest, something to learn from the lessons of environmentalism’s fall. They have to learn humility. They have to recognise that no psychiatric ideology has a claim on the whole truth at every level. If it did it would be a divine ideology, a true religion. And that, in turn, would imply the existence of some scientific god, one that has not yet been discovered, least of all in psychiatry.

Architecture Today: Fun & Games in Japan

Kyoto, Japan



THE VIOLENT student demonstrations of the late 1960s led to an almost vicious architectural reaction, best expressed in the new Supreme Court Building in Tokyo. The building appears like an above ground version of Hitler’s last bunker, brooding and close to hysterical. The reaction could also be seen last year in a new metropolitan police headquarters in downtown Tokyo. With its knotted tower and blank sides, it is considered by many to be one of the ugliest structures conceived in post-1945 Japan.

“Yes, that was a nightmare period”, said the architect and planner. He said he hated every minute of it. “I did my best to escape.”

IN ISOZAKI’S WORK in Japan one senses a perpetual ambiguity, coupled with execution of the highest standards. After Expo ’70, he turned to the design of a major building, with was the memorable clubhouse for a golf course at Fujimi. Isozaki designed the building in the shape of a question mark. It raises the question, in a form hidden from club members, about the utility of golf, which Isozaki regards as an imbecilic sport.

Marcel Duchamp-style jokes punctuate his work.

ISOZAKI’S LATEST WORK in Japan is a factory gymnasium building for the Nippon Electric Glass Co. at Otsu, near Kyoto. It is a visual success. The café noir and café au lait stripes on the outside of the building, crated and “packed” or held together by diagonal steel hawsers, lend a bold color to a dismal industrial landscape. Isozaki has sought to epitomize modern Japan: nature destroyed.

BUT THERE ARE problems with the Nippon Electric Glass building, which was truncated by company request. A guest room concealed inside a structural “Monroe curve”—another part of the Isozaki iconography is the Marilyn Monroe nude after which he designed a very uncomfortable-looking chair—was flattened in the course of construction. The atmosphere in the antechamber is cold, abstract and unpleasant.

“We wanted to bring in a hot plate”, a company manager said, “but Isozaki wouldn’t let us do that. He said, ‘No hot plates in here.’” The factory’s idea was to serve hot foods direct to a table that occupies the center of the pillared guest room.

The balancing factor—there is always one in Isozaki’s work—is humor.

Henry Scott Stokes

in the NEW YORK TIMES

PRESS

Looking back at Viet Nam

How to Lose a War

Reflections of a Foreign Correspondent

By ROBERT ELEGANT

*"Underneath the whisperings
of tropic nights
there is a darker whispering
that death invents especially
for northern men. . . ."*

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS,
"Adam"



IN THE EARLY 1960s, when the Viet Nam War became a big story, most foreign correspondents assigned to cover the story wrote primarily to win the approbation of the crowd, above all their own crowd. As a result, in my view, the self-

reporting they created became ever further detached from political and military realities because it instinctively concentrated on its own self-justification. The American press, naturally dominant in an "American war", somehow felt obliged to be less objective than partisan, to take sides, for it was inspired by the *engagé* "investigative" reporting that burgeoned in the US in these impassioned years. The press was instinctively "agin the Government"—and, at least reflexively, for Saigon's enemies.

During the latter half of the 15-year American involvement in Viet Nam the media became the primary battlefield. Illusory events reported by the press as well as real events *within* the press corps were more decisive than the clash of arms or the contention of ideologies. For the first time in modern history, the outcome of a war was determined not on the battlefield, but on the printed page

and, above all, on the television screen. Looking back coolly, I believe it can be said (surprising as it may still sound) that South Vietnamese and American forces actually won the limited military struggle. They virtually crushed the Viet Cong in the South, the "native" guerrillas who were directed, reinforced, and equipped from Hanoi; and thereafter they threw back the invasion by regular North Vietnamese divisions. None the less, the War was finally lost to the invaders *after* the US disengagement because the political pressures built up by the media had made it quite impossible for Washington to maintain even the minimal material and moral support that would have enabled the Saigon régime to continue effective resistance.

Since I am considering causes rather than effects, the demoralisation of the West, particularly the United States, that preceded and followed the fall of South Viet Nam is beyond the scope of this article. It is, however, interesting to wonder whether Angola, Afghanistan, and Iran would have occurred *if* Saigon had not fallen amid nearly universal odium—that is to say, *if* the "Viet Nam Syndrome", for which the press (in my view) was largely responsible, had not afflicted the Carter Administration and paralysed American will. On the credit side, largely despite the press, the People's Republic of China would almost certainly not have purged itself of the Maoist doctrine of "worldwide liberation through people's war" and, later, would not have come to blows with Hanoi if the defence of South Viet Nam had not been maintained for so long.

The Brotherhood

"YOU COULD BE HARD about it and deny that there was a brotherhood working there, but what else could you call it?" This is a question that Michael Herr asked in his *Dispatches*,¹ a personally honest, but basically deceptive book.

¹ Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (Pan, 1978).

"But . . . all you ever talked about was the war, and they could come to seem like two different wars at the same time. Because who but another correspondent could talk the kind of *mythical* war you *wanted* to hear described?"

I have added the italics; for in the words "mythical" and "wanted" the essential truth is laid bare. In my own personal experience most correspondents *wanted* to talk chiefly to other correspondents to confirm their own *mythical* vision of the war. Even newcomers were pre-committed, as the American jargon has it, to the collective position most of their colleagues had already taken. What I can only call surrealistic reporting constantly fed on itself; and did not diminish thereby, but swelled into ever more grotesque shapes. I found the process equally reprehensible for being in no small part unwitting.

John le Carré (whose extravagant encomium adorns the cover of the Pan edition of *Dispatches*: "The best book I have ever read on men and war in our times") is, I feel, too clever a writer to believe he painted an even proximately accurate picture of South-east Asia in *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1972). But he brilliantly depicted the press corps and the correspondents' Asia, an encapsulated, self-defining world whirling in its own eccentric orbit. Correspondents, briefly set down in the brutally alienating milieu called Viet Nam, turned to each other for professional sustenance and emotional comfort. After all, there was nowhere else to turn, certainly not to stark reality, which was both elusive and repellent.

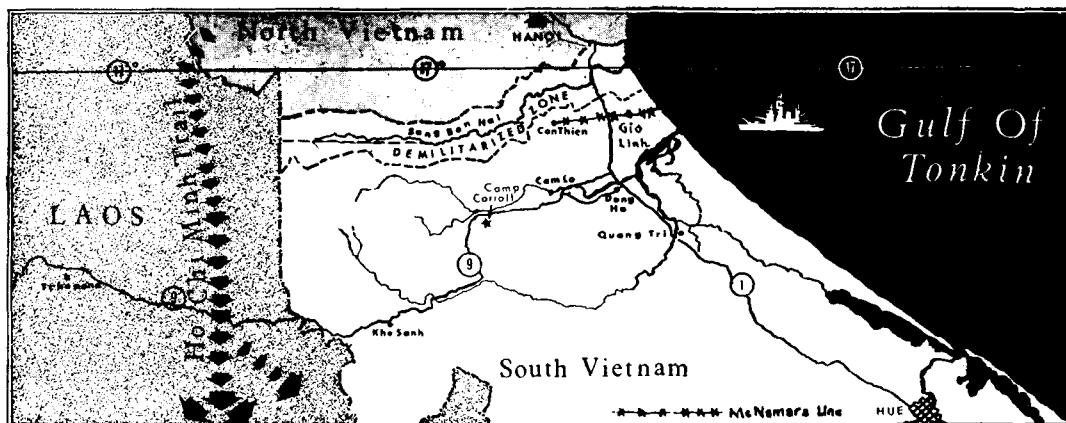
Most correspondents were isolated from the Vietnamese by ignorance of their language and culture, as well as by a measure of race estrangement. Most were isolated from the quixotic American Army establishment, itself often as confused as they themselves were, by their moralistic attitudes and their political prejudices. It was inevitable, in the circumstances, that they came to write, in the first instance, for each other.

To be sure, the approbation of his own crowd gave a certain fullness to the correspondent's life in exile that reached beyond the irksome routine of reporting and writing. The disapprobation of his peers could transform him into a bitterly defensive misanthrope (I think here of one industrious radio and newspaper stringer who was reputed to be the richest correspondent in Viet Nam, except, of course, for the television stars). Even the experienced correspondents, to whom Asia was "home" rather than a hostile temporary environment, formed their own little self-defensive world within the larger world of the newcomers.

IT WAS NO WONDER that correspondents writing to win the approbation of other correspondents in that insidiously collegial atmosphere produced reporting that was remarkably homogeneous. After each other, correspondents wrote to win the approbation of their editors, who controlled their professional lives and who were closely linked with the intellectual community at home. The consensus of that third circle, the domestic intelligentsia, derived largely from correspondents' reports and in turn served to determine the nature of those reports. If dispatches did not accord with that consensus, approbation was withheld. Only in the last instance did correspondents address themselves to the general public, the mass of lay readers and viewers.

The Cloud of Unknowing

IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT most correspondents were, in one respect, very much like the ambitious soldiers they derided. A tour in Viet Nam was almost essential to promotion for a US Regular Army officer, and a combat command was the best road to rapid advancement. Covering the biggest continuing story in the world was not absolutely essential to a correspondent's rise, but it



was an invaluable cachet. Quick careers were made by spectacular reporting of the obvious fact that men, women, and children were being killed; fame or at least notoriety rewarded the correspondent who became part of the action—rather than a mere observer—by influencing events directly.

Journalists, particularly those serving in television, were therefore, like soldiers, “rotated” to Viet Nam. Few were given time to develop the knowledge, and indeed the intellectual instincts, necessary to report the War in the round. Only a few remained “in country” for years, though the experienced Far Eastern correspondents visited regularly from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Tokyo. Not surprisingly, one found that most reporting veered farther and farther from the fundamental political, economic, and military realities of the War, for these were usually *not* spectacular. Reporting Viet Nam became a closed, self-generating system sustained largely by the acclaim the participants lavished on each other in almost equal measure to the opprobrium they heaped on “the Establishment”, a fashionable and very vulnerable target.

FOR SOME JOURNALISTS, perhaps most, a moment of truth through self-examination was never to come. The farther they were from the real conflict, the more smugly self-approving they now remain as commentators who led the public to expect a brave new world when the North Vietnamese finally “liberated” South Viet Nam. Even those correspondents who today gingerly confess to some

errors or distortions usually insist that the true fault was not theirs at all, but Washington’s. The enormity of having helped in one way or another to bring tens of millions under grinding totalitarian rule—and having tilted the global balance of power—appears too great to acknowledge. It is easier to absolve one’s self by blaming exclusively Johnson, Nixon, and Kissinger.

I found few American correspondents to be as tough-minded as one Briton I knew who was very close to the action for many years in the employ of an American wire-news service. “I’m ashamed of most of what I wrote in Viet Nam”, he told me recently. “But I was a new boy, and I took my lead from the Americans, who were afire with the crusading spirit of ‘60s journalism—the involvement, man, in the good fight. When I look at what’s happened now, I’m ashamed of my ignorance—and what I helped to do to the Vietnamese. . . .”²

As one West German correspondent has confessed (Uwe Siemon-Netto in the *International Herald Tribune*, reprinted in *ENCOUNTER*, October 1979):

“Having covered the Viet Nam war over a period of five years for West German publications, I am now haunted by the role we journalists have played over there.

Those of us who had wanted to find out knew of the evil nature of the Hanoi régime. We knew that, in 1956, close to 50,000 peasants were executed in North Viet Nam. We knew that after the division of the country nearly one million North Vietnamese had fled to the South. Many of us have seen the tortured and carved-up bodies of men, woman and children executed by the Viet Cong in the early phases of the war. And many of us saw, in 1968, the mass graves of Hue, saw the corpses of thousands of civilians still festively dressed for Tet, the Vietnamese New Year.

Why, for heaven’s sake, did we not report about these expressions of deliberate North Vietnamese strategy at least as extensively as of the My Lai massacre and other such isolated incidents that were definitely not part of the US policy in Viet Nam?

What prompted us to make our readers believe that the Communists, once in power in all of Viet Nam, would behave benignly? What made us, first and foremost Anthony Lewis, belittle warnings by US officials that a Communist victory would result in a massacre?

Why did we ignore the fact that the man responsible for the executions of 50,000 peasants, Truong Chinh, was—and still is—one of the most powerful figures in Hanoi? What made us think that he and his comrades would have mercy for the vanquished South Vietnamese? What compelled, for example,

² I note in the British press a controversial reconsideration of what the War did to the Americans, especially the GI veterans of the Viet Nam battle-front. In an Associated Television documentary, John Pilger made a damning indictment of the treatment of its returning soldiers by the United States, left to their alcoholism and drug addiction, without pension, perks, and the honours of War memorials, etc. One critic (Philip Purser, *Sunday Telegraph*, 17 May 1981) called attention to the “whopping irony of Pilger’s whole thesis”, for “no commentator had worked more untiringly to promote that verdict [disgrace and ignominy] than Pilger himself. . . .”

John Pilger objected on behalf of “those suffering and betrayed young American patriots.” To which Purser replied:

“So they are ‘American patriots’ now. I don’t remember Mr Pilger regarding them in that light in his despatches and documentaries during the Viet Nam War, or its immediate aftermath. As I said, no commentator worked harder to discredit American involvement in Viet Nam, and foster the attitudes to which the ex-servicemen have fallen victim. My rage was directed solely at this hypocrisy.”

(*Sunday Telegraph*, 31 May)

The bitter conclusion of one foreign correspondent, the late Marguerite Higgins, writing from Viet Nam, was: “Reporters here would like to see us lose the war to prove they are right. . . .” Quoted in Philip Knightley’s history of “the War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker” entitled *The First Casualty* (1975), p. 380.

Anthony Lewis shortly after the fall of Saigon to pat himself on the shoulder and write, 'so much for the talk of a massacre'?

True, no Cambodian-style massacre took place in Viet Nam. It's just that Hanoi coolly drives its ethnic Chinese and opponents into the sea.

Are we journalists not in part responsible for the death of the tens of thousands who drowned? And are we not in part responsible for the hostile reception accorded to those who survive? Did we not turn public opinion against them, portraying them, as one singularly ignoble cartoon did in the United States, as a bunch of pimps, whores, war profiteers, corrupt generals or, at best, outright reactionaries?

Considering that today's Viet Nam tragedy may have a lot to do with the way we reported yesterday's Viet Nam tragedy; considering that we journalists might have our fair share of guilt for the inhuman way the world treats those who are being expelled by an inhuman régime which some of us had pictured as heroic. I think at least a little humility would be in order for us old Viet Nam hands. . . ."

JOURNALISTIC INSTITUTIONS are, of course, rarely afflicted by false modesty. They have not disclaimed credit for the outcome of the war, and their representatives have taken public bows for their successful intervention. The multitude of professional prizes bestowed upon the "big-story" coverage of Viet Nam certainly implied approval of the general effort.

However, the media have been rather coy; they have not declared that they played a *key* role in the conflict. They have not proudly trumpeted Hanoi's repeated expressions of gratitude to the mass media of the non-Communist world, although Hanoi has indeed affirmed that it could not have won "without the Western press." The Western press appears either unaware of the direct connection between cause (its reporting) and effect (the Western defeat in Viet Nam), or strangely reluctant to proclaim that the pen and the camera proved decisively mightier than the bayonet and ultra-modern weapons.

NOR HAVE THE MEDIA dwelt upon the glaring inconsistency between the expectation they raised of peaceful, prosperous development after Saigon's

collapse and the present post-War circumstances in Indo-China. Unquestionably, a number of those approvingly characterised by the *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis as "critics of the American war" have protested against brutal repression in Cambodia. Some (including Lewis, and the French journalist Jean Lacouture³) even confessed that their expectations of the consequences of a Communist victory in Cambodia were mistaken. But none, to my knowledge, has suggested that he might have erred fundamentally in his vehement and total opposition to the US role in Indo-China. Instead, most partial confessions have concluded with renewed denunciations of American actions.

Jean Lacouture did offer a public *mea culpa* for having championed the Khmer Rouge. Reviewing a book on "Democratic Kampuchea", he confessed:

"François Ponchoud's *Cambodia, Year Zero* can be read only with shame by those of us who supported the Khmer Rouge cause. . . . And it will cause distress to those of us journalists who, after the massacre of seventeen of our colleagues in April and May 1971, tried to explain these deaths as part of the hazards of covering a disorganised guerrilla war. In fact, our poor comrades were assassinated—some, we know, clubbed to death—by the valiant guerrillas of Khieu Samphan, the 'socialist' Khmer who now bars foreign observers from Cambodian soil. His people remain in terror-stricken confinement, one of his régime's more rational decisions: for how could it let the outside world see its burying of a civilisation in pre-history, its massacres? . . ."

An illuminating example is Anthony Lewis, whose horror over abuses of American power apparently led him to the conclusion that similar abuses by America's opponents were not worth noting. Having earlier found almost as much to praise in Hanoi as to condemn in Saigon, Lewis was belatedly moved to outrage by Lacouture's observations—Jean Lacouture's chief qualification was apparently his having been so spectacularly wrong about the consequences of a Khmer Rouge victory.

". . . Those of us who had been critics of the war [Lewis wrote] may have felt sceptical about some of the Cambodian reports because they came from right-wing⁴ quarters that had been indifferent to the misery inflicted on Cambodia by American bombers. But these explanations wither in the presence of Jean Lacouture. He is a leading French expert on Indo-China. And he was a profound critic of the American war."

The reporters—and even the contrite Jean Lacouture—have continued to disregard the testimony regarding earlier North Vietnamese coer-

³ See, in ENCOUNTER, Jean Lacouture's "The Revolution that Destroyed Itself" (May 1979).

⁴ Note the self-defining definition. Those who saw the realities, predicted them and reported them, became *a priori* "right-wing" because they had been "insufficiently critical" of the American role in Indo-China.

cion offered by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's former chief-of-state. Sihanouk complained in 1973 that he had been forced to tolerate North Viet Nam using Cambodia as a supply route, training camp, and proving ground for its forces in South Viet Nam, although he knew the massive incursion was destroying his country. Preoccupied with their condemnation of US intervention in Indo-China, the "critics of the American war" have virtually ignored Sihanouk's indictment of the North Vietnamese—just as they have ignored the fact that Sihanouk had, albeit under duress, tolerated American bombing of North Vietnamese strongholds in Cambodia, the "unilateral action" for which those critics still pillory Henry Kissinger.⁵

The same critics were *not* outraged at the final conquest of South Viet Nam in 1975 by columns of Russian-built tanks supported by batteries of Russian-made artillery. (That was Hanoi's second try; the first, in 1972, failed because the Saigon régime was still supported by US air power and was still receiving adequate US war *matériel*.) These righteous critics have taken little note of the detailed description of that final conquest published by North Viet Nam's Senior General Van Tien Dung in the spring of 1976. General Dung's account (128 single-spaced pages in English translation) proudly affirmed that the assault was ordered by the Political Bureau of the Labour (Communist) Party of North Viet Nam, planned by the Labour Party's Central Military Affairs Committee, commanded by Northern generals, supplied from the North, and mounted by regular divisions of the People's Army of the Democratic Republic of North Viet Nam.

Even before General Dung's report, it should have been clear that the remnants of the Viet Cong—the Southern "guerrilla force" made up primarily of Northerners—were inherently capable neither of manoeuvring 700 tanks in conventional formations nor, for that matter, of building and operating the double pipeline that fuelled those tanks with petroleum from the North. Just as they subsequently passed over General Dung's explicit revelations, the "critics of the American war" ignored such empirical evidence that Saigon fell not to an indigenous people in arms, but to an external invasion mounted by vanguard cadres who consider themselves ideologically superior to their Southern compatriots.

TO TAKE NOTE OF these obtrusive facts would have called into question the very nature of the war in

Indo-China—as it would have taken note of them during the conflict. Any searching analysis of fundamental premises has remained as unthinkable to "the critics" as it was during the fighting. They have remained committed to the proposition that the American role in Indo-China was totally reprehensible and inexcusable, while the North Vietnamese role—and, by extension, the roles of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the Pathet Lao in Laos—was righteous, magnanimous, and just. Even the growing number who finally deplored the repressive consequences of the totalitarian victory could not bring themselves to re-examine the premises that led them to contribute so decisively to those victories. Thus William Shawcross, before his sententious book, *Sideshow*,⁶ wrote of the Communists' reshaping of Cambodian society: "The process is atrociously brutal." Although "the Khmer people are suffering horribly under their new rulers", this is how Shawcross unhesitatingly assigned the ultimate blame:

"They have suffered every day of the last six years—ever since the beginning of one of the most destructive foreign policies the United States has ever pursued: the 'Nixon-Kissinger doctrine' in its purest form. . . ."

The Eye of the Beholder

MOST CORRESPONDENTS on the scene were not quite as vehement. But they were moved by the same conviction of American guilt, which was so fixed that it resisted all the evidence pointing to a much more complex reality. Employed in the service of that crusading fervour was, for the first time, the most emotionally moving medium of all.

Television, its thrusting and simplistic character shaping its message, was most shocking because it was most immediate. The Viet Nam War was a presence in homes throughout the world. Who could seriously doubt the veracity of so plausible



⁵ Cf. Peter W. Rodman's "Sideshow: Kissinger, Shawcross and the Responsibility for Cambodia", in *The American Spectator* (March 1981).

⁶ William Shawcross, *Sideshow* (André Deutsch, 1979).

and so moving a witness in one's own living-room?

At any given moment, a million images were available to the camera's lens in Saigon alone—and hundreds of millions throughout Indo-China. But TV crews naturally preferred the most dramatic. That, after all, was their business—show business. It was not news to film farmers peacefully tilling their rice-fields, though it might have been argued that nothing happening *was* news when the American public had been led to believe that almost every Vietnamese farmer was regularly threatened by the Viet Cong, constantly imperilled by battle, and rarely safe from indiscriminate US bombing.

A few hard, documented instances. A burning village was news, even though it was a deserted village used in a Marine training exercise—even though the television correspondent had handed his Zippo lighter to a non-commissioned officer with the suggestion that he set fire to an abandoned house. American soldiers cutting ears off a Viet Cong corpse was news—even if the cameraman had offered the soldiers his knife and “dared” them to take those grisly souvenirs. (Since the antics of the media were definitely *not* news, the network refrained from apologising for the contrived “event” when a special investigation called the facts

to its attention.) Cargo-nets full of dead South Vietnamese soldiers being lowered by helicopters were news—even if that image implicitly contradicted the prevailing conviction that the South Vietnamese never fought, but invariably threw away their weapons and ran.

THE COMPETITION IN BEASTLINESS among the networks was even more intense than the similar competition among the representatives of the print media. Only rarely did television depict peaceful fields in which water buffaloes pulled ploughs for diligent farmers—undisturbed by air-bursts, rockets, infantrymen, or guerrillas. One special report *was*, however, devoted largely to depicting bucolic scenes and untravelled roads when Prince Norodom Sihanouk invited a television correspondent to tour the border areas of Cambodia to prove that his country was *not* being used by the North Vietnamese as a base for operations against South Viet Nam. A few years later, Sihanouk, of course acknowledged that the North Vietnamese *had* at the time been—and had remained—intensely active in precisely those areas. But television could “prove” either a negative or a positive proposition—depending on where the camera

Viet Nam Duplicity . . .

Ho Chi Minh City



AS A REPORTER here during the Vietnam war, I suspected that the Communists had infiltrated the South Vietnamese régime as well as the US mission. Now back in Saigon, as this city was formerly called, I have been able to confirm those suspicions.

More dramatically, I have learned that these Communist agents included close Vietnamese acquaintances—not only trusted by me but also by US officials, who relied heavily on their cooperation without knowing their true identity.

This duplicity is not surprising. In a civil war without front lines, friend and foe are difficult to distinguish.

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE, the case of Col. Pham Ngoc Thao, who until his death was one of the most dynamic and brilliant figures in the Saigon régime's crusade against Communism.

In reality, Col. Thao was a key Communist operative all along. His remains were recently transferred to the Patriots' Cemetery here, but his past role has not been made public, presumably because the present Vietnamese authorities fear reprisals against his widow, who currently lives in Texas.

Born into a wealthy Catholic family, Col. Thao attended French schools in Saigon. But like many Vietnamese intellectuals, humiliated under French colonialism, he joined the Communist-led Viet Minh struggling for independence against France.

When the Geneva accords partitioned Vietnam in 1954, he “rallied” to the Saigon government then being formed by Ngo Dinh Diem. As a Communist “defector”, he persuaded President Diem that he knew how to fight Communists, and his influence soared.

IN THE LATE 1950s, he urged President Diem to construct “agrovilles”, enclosures into which peasants were forcibly corralled in order to cut them off from the Viet Cong. He later designed the “Strategic Hamlet” program, which had a similar aim. But both schemes, enthusiastically funded by the United States, were actually devious devices. Or as one of Col. Thao's old comrades told me: “His purpose was to antagonize peasants and alienate them from the Diem régime, and it worked.”

WHEN I FIRST MET Col. Thao in 1961, he was chief of Bentre province, a Communist bastion south of Saigon. He seemed to have gained control over the area. I wrote an article praising his skill at counterinsurgency. Others, among them columnist Joseph Alsop, turned him into a celebrity.

In fact, as a former Viet Cong leader here

pointed and upon the correspondent's inclination.⁷

In fairness, a number of newspaper correspondents also endorsed Sihanouk's contention that there were no North Vietnamese soldiers in Cambodia. Since the correspondents had seen no invaders, there were, patently, no invaders to be seen. The assumption of omniscience that lay behind so much of the coverage of Indo-China remains awe-inspiring.

One tale involving the aerial jeep of Viet Nam was so magnified that it lost any connection with actual events. That was the story of unwounded Vietnamese soldiers bandaging themselves in order to swarm on to helicopters for

evacuation from their raid into Laos in 1971.

That raid on the North Vietnamese installations and supply routes that were called the "Ho Chi Minh Trails" was no great success. But, as I found after two weeks of my own intensive investigation, it was hardly the débâcle described by most of the press. South Vietnamese planning for their command's first major independent military operation was faulty; some units deported themselves badly; but others fought well. None the less, descriptions of a "South Vietnamese rout" were made graphic by repeated reports of soldiers bandaging imaginary wounds.

On close questioning, one Western journalist (a wire-service man), who was shaking with indignation at South Vietnamese pusillanimity, admitted that: (1) he had seen no soldier bandaging unbroken skin; but (2) he had seen soldiers bandaging "mere scratches." He finally conceded that: (1) he had seen no soldier bandage a scratch and then "swarm aboard a helicopter"; and (2) having never marched through a jungle, he did not know how rapidly untreated "scratches" could become severe infections in that malignant environment. However, his stories of South Vietnamese cowardice had already been widely published, and he, quite naturally, did not wish to provoke his home office

⁷ Newspaper- and wire-service correspondents were the *de facto* public relations officers of the Buddhist monks who immolated themselves in protest against the Saigon régime in the early 1960s, and television pictures deeply moved decent men and women. Television could, upon occasion, also be a factor on the battlefield itself because of the correspondents' heady conviction of omnipotence. A minor (but characteristic) incident occurred when a TV correspondent set up his camera on a road beside which a South Vietnamese battalion was dug in against the Viet Cong. The camera's lens pointed out the battalion's positions for the enemy's snipers. The correspondent's courage there was beyond dispute, but his good sense was open to question.

... Reconsidered

disclosed to me, Col. Thao and the Communists in Bentre had reached a covert understanding to make "pacification" look good. "In that way", the Viet Cong leader explained, "we could build up our strength without being molested."

ONE OF Col. Thao's most important dupes during the early 1960s was Dr. Tran Kim Tuyen, the boss of Diem's secret police, whose organization had been created by the US Central Intelligence Agency. In more than one instance, Thao got Dr. Tuyen to release Viet Cong suspects.

In 1963, an internal opposition to President Diem mounted, Col. Thao and Dr. Tuyen conspired to oust the régime. Their objectives differed, however.

DR. TUYEN, a fierce anti-Communist living in England, wanted a government that would wage the war more effectively. Col. Thao, in contrast, was manoeuvring to install a junta of colonels that would negotiate a deal with the Communists.

A group of generals ultimately staged the coup in which President Diem was assassinated. The morning after, I recall, Col. Thao warned me to expect another coup by colonels under his direction. His plan, a Communist source here says, was to make South Vietnam neutral prior to its eventual reunification with the North.

COL. THAO'S COUNTERCOUP failed, but his clandestine Communist connections never surfaced.

On the contrary, his credentials were still so clean that he was assigned to the South Vietnamese Embassy in Washington, where he could conveniently monitor US activities.

Returning to Saigon in 1965, he resumed his plotting, now against the régime headed by Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky. This time, though, his luck ran out.

TRACKED DOWN by President Thieu, he was betrayed by a Catholic priest and captured. President Thieu, ironically convinced that he was working for the CIA, had him tortured horribly. Col. Thao died without divulging his real identity. His torturer, President Thieu's special police chief, is alive and well in the United States.

THERE ARE OTHER CASES, like that of my friend Pham Xuan An, who worked as a full-fledged correspondent for "Time" Magazine in Saigon, an unusual position for a Vietnamese journalist.

He also furnished the US Embassy with inside information—or perhaps it was "disinformation." For he was really a Communist agent, and he is now a senior official in the administration here.

My attempts to see him have been fruitless.

Stanley Karnow
INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE
(Paris)

by filing a correction. If he had, the correction *might* have been filed to the wire-service's world-wide clients. If it had been "moved on the wire", it *might* not have been printed widely or conspicuously. What had not happened was simply not news . . . even if it had already been reported as having happened.

Television reports had one distinct advantage. A picture of nothing was, obviously, more convincing than a printed report of nothing.

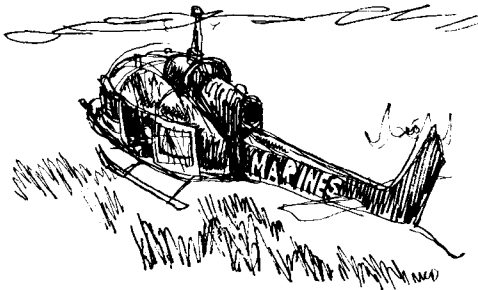
One of the most persistent "horror stories" was retailed by the Western newspapers and magazines because television could not, obviously, take pictures of torture. Did interrogators ever push an uncommunicative prisoner out of a helicopter to encourage his fellows to talk? No such atrocity has ever been confirmed, despite the swarms of investigative reporters and the many eager informants among officers and diplomats, whose indignation against stupid and inefficient policies was transmuted by the press into indignant protest against the War itself.

One such "incident", staged with a corpse, was turned up by the meticulous research of Günter Lewy for his book *America in Vietnam*,⁸ which should be required reading for all war correspondents. A US soldier acquired a photograph of that grisly incident, and went on to invent an account of how a prisoner was killed by being hurled from a helicopter. The imagined event was given wide coverage.⁹

Interrogation by macabre example *did* make a great story, though it probably never happened and, certainly, has never been proved.

The Reporters

SUCH SKEWED REPORTING occurred frequently; it was sometimes major and sometimes trivial. Since I am discussing motivations, not drawing up any kind of indictment, a catalogue of such incidents would be superfluous. But a few striking examples may help to make the general point. First, the case of the imaginary general told by a British colleague.



An American correspondent who was later to write a highly praised book on Viet Nam was chuckling over a telegram in the terrace café of the Hotel Continental, known to habitués as "the Continental Shelf." His editors had asked him to confirm that it would be neither libellous nor vexatious to quote the US general who had in the correspondent's last dispatch been highly critical of the entire American effort—on the Continental Shelf (which generals, by the way, did not frequent).

"Of course", he told his questioner, "I cabled them to go ahead and not worry. Why should they? After all, I made that general up." The imaginary general in the dispatch made a repeat performance in the correspondent's book.

Sgt. John Ashe (brother of the world-famous tennis-player) was a Marine assigned to public-relations duties. He delivered a biting indictment of the young wire-service correspondents and the "war freaks" who frequented Da Nang (which was a remote outpost to the media, though not to the military). They would, he recalled, rarely go into the field and never spend the night when they did; would deport themselves as if they had never heard a shot fired with intent to kill before that moment—to their own and the Marines' peril; and then file stories that "bore little or no relation" to what he—and they—had seen. They didn't want to know, Ashe added, what was really happening in the First Corps Area, where the Marines had winkled out the Viet Cong by stationing squads in villages.

Instructive on a larger scale is the contrast between the coverage of the American massacre at My Lai and the Viet Cong massacre at Hue. At My Lai, a junior American officer allowed his men to kill dozens of presumably uninvolved farmers in full violation of standing orders. At Hue, the former Imperial capital, the Viet Cong killed several thousand community leaders, including a number of Europeans, in accordance with standing orders to "destroy the bourgeoisie." The US military's attempt to suppress reports of the My Lai massacre, of course, made it even worse when the story was finally released by the Dispatch News

⁸ Günter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁹ "I don't believe the military could ever have resorted to that practice", an experienced correspondent pointed out to me. "The helicopter units were always separate, always under their own command, not the ground commander's. The chopper crews were proud of their record and would never have permitted intelligence officers to indulge in such a brutal interrogation. Besides, it would have been too dangerous. A chopper is a delicate, unstable craft, and the attendant turmoil could have forced a crash. Could it have happened with the CIA, who controlled their own choppers with civilian pilots? But I never had an inkling of such an incident. And, believe me, I was looking hard for a long time. It would have made a great story!"

Agency, a curious organisation that came into existence in Viet Nam with unknown financial backing and vanished once its purpose of opposing the war had brought Hanoi victory. But the Hue massacre was, somehow, uninteresting. Few correspondents reported that clear signal of the real policies the North Vietnamese would pursue once they had conquered the South.

By the same token, American restraint was *not* news, even to the experienced correspondents, because it was a “non-event.” Flying in a command helicopter of the Ninth Division over the Mekong Delta, another US correspondent and I heard the brigade commander countermand his battalion commander’s order to the infantry and the helicopter gunships to attack some 100 enemy who were pouring out of a surrounded village, still firing.

“Do not, repeat do not, attack”, the colonel directed: “They’re using women and children as shields.”

Neither my colleague nor myself thought the incident worth reporting; that was a palpable error of judgment induced by the atmosphere in which we were working. If the Ninth Division had killed the civilians, we would have filed copiously.

EQUALLY LAMENTABLE was the failure of the Western press to cover with any thoroughness the Army of the Republic of South Viet Nam, which over the long run was doing most of the fighting. Correspondents were reluctant to commit their safety to units whose resolution they distrusted—sometimes for good reason, more often because of a kind of racist contempt—in order to get stories that interested their editors so little. Coverage of Vietnamese politics, as well as social and economic developments, was sporadic—except for military coups and political crises, and those were often misreported.

Examples of misdirected or distorted reporting could be amassed almost indefinitely. The War, after all, lasted some twenty years. A former *Washington Post* and *New York Times* correspondent, Peter Braestrup, has published a two-volume study of the coverage of the Tet Offensive of 1968.¹⁰ Quite significantly, it attracted little interest compared to, say, William Shawcross’s *Sideshow* or Michael Herr’s *Dispatches*.

Nowadays, Jean Lacouture, Anthony Lewis, and William Shawcross (among some other “Viet Nam veterans”) clearly feel deceived or even betrayed by the Communists of Indo-China; yet surely, they voluntarily adopted the ideological bias that allowed Hanoi to deceive them. The

Vietnamese Communists—unlike their Cambodian confrères—had, after all, openly *declared* their intention of imposing totalitarian rule upon the South. Why, then, were the “critics of the American war” so genuinely surprised by the consequences? More crucially, why did a virtual generation of Western journalists deceive itself so consistently as to the nature of the “liberation” in Indo-China? Why did the correspondents *want* to believe in the good faith of the Communists? Why did they so *want* to disbelieve the avowed motives of the United States? Why did so much of their presumably factual reporting regularly reflect their ideological bias?

The obvious explanation is not as ingenuous as it may appear: the majority of Western correspondents and commentators adopted their idiosyncratic approach to the Indo-China War precisely because other journalists had already adopted that approach. To put it more directly, it was fashionable (this was, after all, the age of Radical Chic) to be “a critic of the American war.”

Decisive in the case of the Americans, who set the tone, was the normally healthy adversary relationship between the US press and the US government. American newspapermen have often felt, with some justification, that if an Administration affirmed a controversial fact, that fact—if not *prima facie* false—was at the least suspect. As the lies of successive Administrations regarding Indo-China escalated, that conviction became the credo of the press. The psychological process that began with the unfounded optimism of President John F. Kennedy’s ebullient “New Frontiersmen”, who were by and large believed, ended with the disastrous last stand of Richard Nixon’s dour palace guard, who were believed by no one.

THE REACTION AGAINST official mendacity was initially healthy, but later became distorted, self-serving, and self-perpetuating. A faulty syllogism was unconsciously accepted: Washington was lying consistently; Hanoi contradicted Washington; therefore Hanoi was telling the truth.

The initial inclination to look upon Hanoi as a fount of pure truth was intelligently fostered by the Communists, who selectively rewarded “critics of the American war” with visas to North Viet Nam. A number of influential journalists and public figures (ranging from former cabinet officers to film actresses) were fêted in North Viet Nam. They were flattered not only by the attention and the presumed inside information proffered by the North Vietnamese, but by their access to a land closed to most Americans. The favoured few—and the aspiring many—helped establish a climate in which it was not only fashionable but, somehow, an act of courage to follow the critical crowd in Saigon and

¹⁰ Peter Braestrup, *The Big Story* (Westview Press, in cooperation with Freedom House, 1977).

Washington while praising Hanoi. The sceptical correspondent risked ostracism by his peers and conflicts with his editors if he did not run with "the herd of independent minds", if he did not support the consensus.

The larger reason for the tenacity of the consensus went much deeper. It welled from a new view of *this* War, which was quite different from the press's view of other wars—and from a new messianic approach to the role of the press in wartime. The alteration occurred in three stages, beginning with World War II, proceeding through the Korean War, and culminating in Viet Nam.

Three Wars

WORLD WAR II was generally considered a crusade against evil. Allied and Soviet atrocities normally went unreported, since their publication to the world would have besmirched the anti-Nazi crusade. The bestial aims and deeds of the Nazis, reinforced by the bestial deeds of the

Japanese, compelled correspondents and officials to agreement on the nature of the War and, therefore, to substantial agreement on the way it was fought. The press might criticise tactical errors; it might even cavil at certain strategic decisions. But it was bent neither upon revealing every possible error or mis-statement made by the authorities nor upon questioning their fundamental purposes.

The Korean War was not a universal crusade. A few correspondents questioned the wisdom of committing US troops to the peninsula, while many questioned the strategic decisions of General Douglas MacArthur (particularly his dash to the Yalu, which directly challenged the Chinese, whose industrial plexus lay in Manchuria just across that river). The character and administration of President Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea were often criticised by those correspondents whose interest extended beyond military hostilities. None the less, a limited consensus did exist. No one—except the Stalinists—doubted seriously that North Korea had attacked South Korea. Aside from those ideologues, no one contended that the Pyongyang régime was an exemplar of virtue simply because it

Between Sorrow & Anger



LE DUAN, successor to Ho Chi Minh as party leader, stated before the United Assembly in June 1976: "We shall build our country ten times bigger and ten times more beautiful." He is partially truthful: he

occupied Laos, invaded Cambodia, and attacked Thailand.

Some boat people who left Viet Nam recently told me mockingly, "No one died of hunger in Saigon, but some have died of hunger in Ho Chi Minh City."

Truong Nhu Tang recently formed in Paris a front called the National Salvation Council to gather all Vietnamese to fight the current Communist régime in Viet Nam. Truong Nhu Tang, one of the founders of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) and a former justice minister of the provisional revolutionary government, fled the country in a tiny boat in 1979. Truong Nhu Tang says he feels "sorrow" about his past naiveté and wishes to continue to fight for the independence and freedom of his compatriots.

Despite overwhelming evidence of the brutality of the Communist dictatorship in Viet Nam, those who

told us that such a dictatorship is what the Vietnamese people wanted are curiously silent. Some of the anti-War authors wrote many books and articles saying during the War years that the Viet Cong were really independent from the Hanoi Communists and that Hanoi did not want to impose communism on South Viet Nam.

I AM NOT ANGRY with these people about their past anti-War activity if they did it for the interests of the people and not for a small group of Vietnamese Communists. But do they feel sorrow today that the Communists deceived them? Why do they keep silent about the present tragedies in Indo-China? This amnesia is criminal. Their silence damages the reputation of the Left.

American linguist Noam Chomsky said categorically that there has been no bloodbath in Viet Nam. But there are many ways to kill people without shedding a drop of blood. There is technically no bloodbath in Viet Nam, but who can say how many silent deaths have occurred on the high seas? How many have died hidden in the Vietnamese gulag?

While former anti-War activists still protest war by America, they keep silent about Soviet invasions. While they raise their voices to denounce South Korea and El Salvador, they keep silent about the tragedies in Viet Nam, where the people must support the insupportable and suffer the insufferable.

DOAN VAN TOAI, author of "Le Goulag Vietnamien" (Paris, 1979), is a Vietnamese "dissident" who is now living in the US, engaged in research at Tufts University on a book about Vietnamese Communism.

Doan Van Toai

WALL STREET JOURNAL

opposed the Seoul régime, whose faults were manifest. Moved neither by basic antagonism towards official aims nor by unthinking commitment to those aims, a surprisingly youthful press corps offered surprisingly objective reports. Aside from a marked weakness in covering internal politics in both the South and the North—a weakness that presaged a disastrous disability in Indo-China—Korea was, in my view, the best-covered American war of modern times. Besides, the conflict was, by and large, straightforward and simple to understand.

Indo-China was never simple or straightforward, but was arcane even before the commitment of US ground forces. Afterwards, it became so complex that it was virtually impossible to understand it in all its ramifications; and, I must add, it was absolutely impossible to convey those ramifications to the public. Today I recall with chagrin my rather condescending amusement when a television producer argued in the mid-1960s: “We shouldn’t be in Indo-China because the American people can’t understand the war—and the people won’t support a war they can’t understand.” He was, of course, right (even if the American press helped to prevent any proper understanding).

Though simplistic television coverage accelerated and intensified popular disillusionment, it was not the decisive factor in determining the collective opinion of the press. The television people went along with the fashion; they did not set the fashion or formulate its conventional wisdom. In any event, Viet Nam was covered by a press corps that was bitterly distrustful of Washington and harshly antagonistic towards Saigon. The press consistently magnified the allies’ deficiencies—and displayed almost saintly tolerance of those misdeeds of Hanoi it could neither disregard nor deny.

IT IS POSSIBLE that the “Viet Nam Syndrome” will recur; it is not unlikely that Western foreign policy, with the United States as its faltering—or even resurgent—leader, will again be forced to operate in an environment dominated by a hostile press. The personal experience of one journalist is not normally pertinent to such a high political question. However, I was, as a correspondent and commentator, perforce a participant as well as an observer in the Viet Nam imbroglio from 1955 to 1975. When “the Media became the War”, everyone associated with the media became part of the War, however reluctantly. An account of my experience, therefore, may illuminate this discussion and help the reader weigh my historical assessments.

From 1955 through 1965 I was opposed to US military intervention despite my personal sympathy for the Indo-Chinese peoples. Having in 1955

sailed from Haiphong in the North to Saigon with several thousand among almost a million refugees from the Democratic Republic, I was moved by their justified fears. Besides, I detested Hanoi’s Stalinist repression. Nevertheless, I felt that Indo-China was a strategic backwater, that should not be transformed into a vital interest by committing regular American troops to a disadvantageous Asian battlefield. Because of my concern with the effect of events in Indo-China upon developments in China and elsewhere in South-east Asia I did, however, feel that the West should not turn its back on Indo-China, though it should avoid entrapment.

Such reservations made me popular with neither official Americans nor with those journalists who urged deeper involvement. Many correspondents and commentators were enthusiastic about the creeping US commitment, while the Administration of President Kennedy reacted strongly to my judgment (in *Newsweek* in late 1961) that President Ngo Dinh Diem could not preserve South Viet Nam. In December 1962, when I was stationed in Europe, a *Newsweek* cover story concluded that Diem was doing well and that the Kennedy commitment to Indo-China was fundamentally sound. That replay of the optimistic Washington view was published over my editorial opposition. (I was, incidentally, not in Indo-China during the battles between Diem and the dissident Buddhists, or during the succession of short-lived régimes that followed Diem’s murder.)

When I returned early in 1966, matters were radically altered. The United States had in 1965 brought in major armed units to prevent the South’s collapse under the North’s intensified subversion. Despite the US intervention, that collapse had clearly only been forestalled, not averted. Direct involvement had, moreover, made Indo-China an area of primary strategic interest to the United States in the eyes not only of apprehensive allies but of potential enemies as well. The United States was committed to the enterprise that had earlier broken the French will, that is, preventing Communist conquest of Indo-China.

CHINA WAS ALREADY launched upon the cataclysmic “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”, a virtual civil war fought to determine whether Maoists or moderates would rule the world’s most populous country. Foreign policy was already a major Chinese issue, and the collapse of South Viet Nam would have strengthened the extremists, who advocated internal suppression and China’s diplomatic isolation. While continuing to urge US recognition of the People’s Republic, I felt that American firmness in Indo-China had to demonstrate to the Maoists that guerrilla warfare could not prevail. Otherwise, the People’s Republic might espouse a wholly Maoist foreign policy,

that is, dedicate herself to "world-wide liberation through people's [guerrilla] wars." Moreover, Peking had just exploded its first "atomic device." The prospect of a messianically Maoist China brandishing an increasing nuclear arsenal appeared a threat to the survival of civilisation.

If Hanoi were blocked in South Viet Nam, I contended, the more cautious moderates would in the long term triumph in Peking, and the threat of a holocaust would recede. After all, Mao believed (as he told Edgar Snow) that a nuclear war would "destroy the world . . . but not us."

China, of course, worked out well. The danger of nuclear war has receded. Today Peking stands against Soviet expansionism—in good part because what happened in Indo-China before 1975 intensified the Sino-Soviet conflict and contributed to the destruction of Mao's strategic doctrine of "the inevitable victory of people's war."

But there was, in 1966, no justification for even guarded optimism regarding South Viet Nam's prospects, and there was to be no such basis until mid-1968. My first report from Saigon after four years of absence described the shocking confusion—in both purpose and execution—of the already bloated American establishment, as well as its isolation from the realities of both the villages and the ministries of Viet Nam. But Washington had forced its own hand; South Viet Nam, defended by the Americans, had become a major

piece on the international chessboard. The US had, I felt, no choice but to remain until the South Vietnamese could effectively defend themselves—or the global balance of power altered radically.

That attitude was not shared by a new corps of foreign correspondents who were newcomers to Asia, though most experienced correspondents agreed. (It did improve my relations with American officialdom, a boon that made me somewhat uneasy.) Having been called a "Communist sympathiser" for advocating recognition of "Red China" in the early 1950s, I was attacked as a "journalistic storm-trooper" for arguing that we could not simply disengage from Indo-China in the late 1960s. (Reverse McCarthyism? Perhaps.)¹¹

The Reasons Why

THE MAIN QUESTION persists. Why was the press—whether in favour of official policy at the beginning or vehemently against the War at the end—so superficial and so biased?

Chief among many reasons was, I believe, the politicisation of correspondents by the constantly intensifying clamour over Viet Nam in Europe and America. Amateur (and professional) propagandists served both sides of the question, but the champions of Hanoi were spectacularly more effective. They created an atmosphere of high



¹¹ Certainly the "liberal" press was no longer interested in my views. When I suggested to an editor of *The New Republic* that I write on Viet Nam, he replied, "Sorry, but I could never get your position into the magazine." *The Nation* had asked me for an article on China, which it duly published. When I suggested a divergent view of Indo-China, the editors regretted that they had just run a special issue on Viet Nam. I would hear from them, they wrote, when the opportunity presented itself. I am still waiting.

My new employers, the *Los Angeles Times*, were tolerant, though one prominent Californian citizen regularly called upon the publisher to demand that I be fired. In 1970, the *Times* assigned me to write a thrice-weekly column on world affairs. Shortly thereafter, difficulties arose, mostly centred on Indo-China. I won my third Overseas Press Club Award for Best Interpretation of Foreign News in early 1972, a distinction then shared only with Walter Lippmann, and I was told by the manager of the *Los Angeles Times/Washington Post* News Service that my column was "a major selling-point." In June 1972, however, I was reassigned to Hong Kong as a correspondent for an indefinite term. The new editor said I had not shone as a columnist.

The attrition finally forced my disengagement from the *Los Angeles Times* and, indeed, from regular employment in the newspaper business. Other possible employers expressed polite approbation of my professional ability, but doubted that I would "fit into" their organisations. Since several had sought my services a few years earlier, I could not help feeling that my position on Viet Nam had something to do with their decisions.

pressure that made it exceedingly difficult to be objective.

In Korea, senior officers who were incensed by unfavourable reports would sometimes demand: "Who are you for—the Communists or us?" Most correspondents were detached and could answer honestly: "Personally for the UN and the US, but professionally for neither side. Just trying to tell the true story..." In Viet Nam that response was virtually impossible amid growing Western horror at the "dirty, immoral war." Correspondents were almost compelled to become partisans, and most became partisans for Hanoi, or, at least, *against* Saigon and Washington.

Revulsion in Europe and America sprang as much from the nature of the correspondents' reporting as it did from the belligerents' direct manipulation of public opinion. Some of my senior colleagues had learned wisdom on a hundred battlefields, having covered World War II, the Chinese Civil War, the Viet Minh campaign against the French, and the Indonesian revolt against the Dutch. I had at least been through Korea, the Malayan "Emergency", and the fighting between Chinese Nationalists and Chinese Communists for Quemoy. But most correspondents had never seen war before their arrival in Indo-China. Many confused the beastliness of all war with the particular war in Indo-China, which they unthinkingly concluded was unique in human history because it was new to them.

This much must be said: the best of their reporting accurately conveyed the horror of war—all war. Yet it presented the suffering, barbarism, and devastation as somehow peculiar to Indo-China. It almost made it appear that other wars had been fought by mailed champions on fields remote from human habitation, while in Indo-China, for the first time, carnage brutally involved both massed military formations and the civilian populace. Since a guerrilla war is inherently not as destructive as a conventional war, human suffering and material devastation had, in reality, been markedly greater in Korea than in Viet Nam—and much, much greater on both Asian and European fronts in World War II.

BECAUSE VIET NAM DID NOT attract many senior correspondents for extended tours, at any given time a majority of the correspondents were new to the complexities of Indo-China. Some could not even look after themselves in combat, the *sine qua non* of a successful—and surviving—war correspondent.

One afternoon in May 1968, when the Viet Cong were attacking the outskirts of Saigon, six young correspondents piled into a single mini-taxi to drive to the shifting "front." They were startled when advised to take two or three taxis so that they could

get out faster if they came under fire. A tall, rotund neophyte wearing a scarlet shirt paraded up and down the road the Viet Cong were attacking. He was dismayed by the pained abhorrence with which South Vietnamese paratroops regarded him, until it was explained that he was drawing rocket fire. The six clustered around a 24-year-old US 1st lieutenant, just out of the Military Academy at West Point, who was struggling to communicate with the Vietnamese major commanding and, simultaneously, to direct the gunships that swooped low, firing their machine-guns. While shells burst around them, the correspondents tried to interrogate the lieutenant on the morality of the US presence in Indo-China.

Many newcomers were shocked to find that American and Vietnamese briefing officers did not always tell them the truth even about a minor tactical situation. Despite their pose of professional scepticism, in their naivety they expected those officers to tell not merely the truth, but the *whole* truth. Far from feeling the deep mistrust of officialdom they affected, the newcomers were dismayed by the briefing officers' inability (or unwillingness) to confide in them unreservedly. Older correspondents did not expect candour from briefing officers. They had learned several wars earlier that the interests of the Press and the interests of the Military did not normally coincide. They also knew that the briefing officers were themselves often uninformed—concerned, perhaps sometimes excessively, for military secrecy—and resentful of correspondents' badgering.

Nevertheless, the candour of US officers astonished experienced correspondents from other nations. Shortly before he was killed in another war, Nicholas Tomalin of *The Sunday Times* reported with amazement the reception given several British correspondents who arrived unannounced at an American airfield. Though he obviously wished them a thousand miles away, the US colonel in command not only made them welcome, but answered all their questions. If it had been a British airfield, Tomalin observed, the group would not have been allowed to land—and if it had landed would have been hustled off within minutes. No supporter of the US endeavour in Indo-China, Tomalin marvelled at the openness with which the foolish Americans conducted their wars.

SENIOR US OFFICERS did, of course, lie to make a case or extemporised when they did not know the answers. From those practices sprang the bitterness that corroded relations between the press and officialdom. No one likes to be treated as a fool even in the best of causes (and no one thought Indo-China was the best of causes). The military were in turn bitter at the unfairness they attributed to correspondents.

Beyond the unremitting drumfire of mutual criticism, two matters rankled particularly: the "Body Count", which for the press notoriously symbolised the military's callousness; and the unavoidably misleading maps delineating the areas under the control of Saigon or the Viet Cong. The military said they released estimates of enemy casualties after each action *primarily* because correspondents demanded concrete evidence of the progress of a war that was not fought along clearly demarcated battle-lines. The officers contended that the maps, which could in no wise accurately depict a hazy, fluid situation, were prepared at the correspondents' request. Officialdom felt there was too much, rather than too little, openness in Viet Nam.

Oscillating between excessive candour and bald falsification, US public-relations policies made the press and the authorities not merely adversaries, but enemies. However paradoxically, some of the most popular officials were the most mendacious. A senior public affairs officer, who always had an answer for the press, once offered an eloquent analysis of Hanoi's weakness based on a captured Viet Cong order. Since his projection of a general Viet Cong retreat seemed askew, even on the basis of that document, I checked with a number of specialists on North Viet Nam available in Saigon. The official, I found, had consulted no specialist, but had offered his own off-hand analysis—presumably to hold his credulous audience.

¹² The insouciance of some correspondents was summed up in a review of my novel *Dynasty*, which, perhaps characteristically, added almost a decade to my age and, simultaneously, assigned me a non-existent flat in Saigon while moving my family from New Delhi to Hong Kong.

"I first met Bob Elegant more than 21 years ago in Saigon. He was fast becoming an old Asia hand at 35 ... working for *Newsweek* while commuting between an Elegant apartment in Hong Kong and digs off Rue Catinat. His knowledge even then was awesome and complicated. He had mastered Cantonese and Mandarin and was fluent in Japanese and Newsweekese. A dedicated scholar-observer, *Elegant knew more about the Orient than seemed necessary*." Tom Stryce, "Book Score", *The Torrance* (California) *Breeze*, 16 September 1977 (my italics).

Gratuitous contributions to confusion in Viet Nam itself were much surpassed by the egregiously misleading opinions offered in Washington.

ESOTERICA like "enemy intentions", however, did not interest one group of correspondents. They were moved primarily neither by the horror nor the portentousness, but by the thrills of Indo-China. They were nicknamed "the war freaks", since they were fascinated by the atmosphere rather than the substance of the War. Cambodia was a favourite resort of theirs. It offered a dangerous little war, abundant opium, marijuana, and heroin, as well as the gracious Royale Hotel, its French cuisine unspoiled by the American incursions, that had ruined Saigon's restaurants. Reflecting the delight of the war freaks, Michael Herr wrote in *Dispatches* that he never went to bed once in Saigon not "stoned", and added:

"Vietnam was our substitute for a happy childhood."

One's first war, the veterans could have told him, is usually an extension of—if not necessarily a substitute for—a happy childhood.

Official deceit was thus exacerbated by incompetent journalism.¹² While complaining about the press, many US officials, who knew they were fighting "a media war", sought to manipulate—rather than inform—correspondents. But they were not skilled at manipulation. While complaining about the government's duplicity, many editors assigned correspondents who were not qualified to fill a normal foreign post, much less to thread the labyrinthine complexities of the Indo-China War. Some editors told their correspondents what they wanted, while many correspondents had made up their own minds before they arrived "in country." Only a few, I trust, were in the unhappy position of the correspondent of an aggressively liberal US FM-radio station who, as he confided to me, was told: "Not every story has to be anti-war."

Beyond the pressures exerted upon them, most correspondents—serving six-month to two-year tours—were woefully ignorant of the setting of the



conflict. Some strove diligently to remedy that crippling deficiency by reading widely and interviewing avidly. Many lacked the time or the inclination to do so—or any real awareness of how crippling their ignorance was to them professionally. Most, as I have noted, knew little about war in general from either experience or study—and less about the theory or practice of guerrilla war. They were untutored not only in the languages, but also in the history, culture, ethnography, and economics of Indo-China, let alone of China and Asia. Since so many were also untroubled by acquaintance with Marxist theory or practice and were hazy about the international balance of power, they were incapable of covering effectively a conflict involving all those elements.

Not even the “old hands” were necessarily well qualified to cover the conflict—who could have been? Arthur Waley?—but, considering our divergent backgrounds and political convictions, the old hands’ general agreement about the nature of the war was remarkable. Most deplored the ineffectiveness and the corruption of successive South Vietnamese governments, but judged native

¹³ Worse in every way, economically as well as politically, although there were those—from Messrs Tom Wicker and Seymour Hersh to Mmes Frances Fitzgerald and Mary McCarthy for the *New York Review of Books*—whose steadfast ideology led them to believe that Revolutionary Liberation would mean Social Progress. They had a vision of the Viet Cong future, and it would work.

Well, the future is working even worse than the past. According to a report in *The Observer* (London, 14 June 1981), starvation is now rampant and the Minister of Health in Saigon has said that “a whole generation of Vietnamese is at stake. . . .” The reporter was William Shawcross (and one notes that, for a change, the name of Dr Henry Kissinger is conspicuous by its absence among the causes of the tragedy):

“Food production and distribution has been one of the Government’s greatest failures since 1975. . . . Floods, typhoons, and droughts have caused serious losses. So has ineffective socialist [*sic*] management. Recently the Government in Hanoi has admitted planning errors and introduced incentives for private enterprise in both industry and agriculture. The collectivisation of agriculture in the south has also been stopped. There is a rice surplus in the south but the Government appears unable to transport it to the north and those who need it in the south cannot afford to buy it. . . .”

During the Viet Nam decade a whole American generation of journalists and intellectuals unlearned the experience of Stalinist society—its incomparable inefficiency; its thick-headed, dogmatic compounding of error and miscalculation; and, not least (so obvious in Eastern Europe and the USSR), its intolerable burden of a costly military machine superimposed on an old-fashioned, hard-pressed, “underdeveloped” economy. As Shawcross notes, with a vague touch of bitterness:

“The other principal cause of Viet Nam’s food shortage—and that which most angers potential Western donors—is its diversion of resources to the military. About 47% of the national budget is now said to be spent on defence.”

(i.e., Southern) disaffection incapable of mounting an armed rebellion without direction, reinforcement, and weapons from the North. Most concurred with the thesis Robert Shaplen advanced in *The Lost Revolution* (1966), agreeing that ineffectual leadership had failed to foster latent nationalistic and reformist enthusiasm in the South, by default ceding those dynamic forces to the North. We did not deceive ourselves that the South enjoyed even marginally good government; but we believed that Northern rule would be much worse for the mass of the people.¹³ We knew that the North and the South, though not necessarily two separate countries, were distinct entities because of the strong regional feelings of the Vietnamese. Although most of us had opposed major American involvement, we saw no way the United States could withdraw unilaterally.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, even we old hands were not always accurate in our reporting or correct in our judgments. Reacting against the spate of negative reports, I myself tended to emphasise the positive aspects, sometimes excessively. No more than the newcomers were the old hands immune to irritation at the duplicity of the American establishment, though we were not as dependent upon press officers. That irritation undoubtedly affected our reporting; so did smouldering anger (which sometimes flared into fury) at the Vietnamese, who were always difficult, often unavailable, regularly evasive, and routinely deceitful. But the old hands knew they had to live and work with the Vietnamese, and they understood the insecurity that haunted Saigon officials. After generations of colonial rule and internal conflict, no Vietnamese really trusted any other Vietnamese except those within his immediate family (and them neither invariably nor wholly). The newcomers either could not or would not understand what moved the Vietnamese or why they so often seemed to be behaving so badly.

THE ATMOSPHERE “in country” was heavily oppressive, as was our awareness that we were writing for a public that had virtually prejudged the War. My Lai was not reported at the time because the military effectively camouflaged that atrocity. Other allied excesses *were* reported, while many reverse My Lais *were not* reported; and Viet Cong atrocities were often discounted. Myths flourished because of the journalists’ bias and the contempt they felt for the Vietnamese.

By innuendo and mis-statement the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam was reduced in the public eye to a corrupt rabble; far, far, less effective than the Republic of Korea Army during the earlier war.

In reality, the ARVN was strikingly more effective than the ROKA had been; but correspondents were friendly to the ROKA and antagonistic to the ARVN.

That tale of hundreds of Vietnamese soldiers bandaging non-existent wounds in order to be evacuated as casualties was just one example. That graphic and erroneous story reinforced the general impression that the cowardly South Vietnamese were unwilling to fight in defence of their own cause. That misleading conclusion undoubtedly encouraged US reluctance to supply Saigon's forces adequately after the American withdrawal. That reluctance, which contributed decisively to the final collapse, was then "proved" correct.

Despite their own numerous and grave faults, the South Vietnamese were, first and last, decisively defeated in Washington, New York, London, and Paris. Those media defeats made inevitable their subsequent defeat on the battlefield. Indo-China was not perhaps the first major conflict to be won by psychological warfare. But it was probably the first to be lost by psychological warfare conducted at such great physical distance from the actual fields of battle—and so far from the peoples whose fate was determined by the outcome of the conflict.

The "Viet Nam Syndrome"

WHEN I DRAFTED THIS ARTICLE, I had not intended to dilate upon the possible consequences in the future of the new role of the press in war. Those consequences seemed too obvious. Besides, I did not wish to arouse contention, but to evoke dispassionate consideration. After all, the passage of time should by this time have appreciably cooled the intense emotion that moved both the reluctant supporters and the vehement critics of the "American war."

I felt, moreover, that I had adequately demonstrated that the press acted—and could well again act—as a multiplier of the prejudices of the Western intelligentsia, whose tender conscience moves it to condemn the actions of its own side while condoning related deeds of enemies who are either "immature" or "feel themselves

threatened." It did not, for example, seem necessary to demonstrate at length that World War II could well have been lost by the Allied powers if the press had wished—and been allowed—to denounce almost all the purposes and virtually the entire conduct of that conflict. (Surely, for example, Churchill would have been prevented from helping Greece—because of Metaxas.) It did not seem necessary to labour the obvious point that no Western power can conduct a foreign policy that, of necessity, relies in part on the threat of military power and, upon occasion, on the exercise of military power if the media reflexively denounce almost any use of armed force. I believed it would suffice to offer the brief warning already stated above: Western foreign policy could again be forced to operate most precariously in an environment dominated by a hostile press. It did not, finally, seem necessary to point out that the effective prohibition of limited, conventional war by an inflamed public opinion could lead to either political surrender or nuclear holocaust.

Since the article was written, events have denied me the luxury of refraining from underlining the obvious. The predicament I suggested was likely has already become a reality. It is exemplified in El Salvador, about which, I must acknowledge, I know nothing directly, and indirectly no more than any other reasonably diligent reader of the press. None the less, the recrudescence of the "Viet Nam Syndrome" in the media is not merely unmistakable, but distressingly blatant.¹⁴

"Viet Nam" has become not merely an invidious comparison, but a magical incantation. The woolly-minded need only declare vehemently that El Salvador is already—or could become—"another Viet Nam" for the enterprise to be condemned and, probably, blighted. Throughout the Western world, commentators and reporters have invoked the spectre of Viet Nam to arouse detestation of a Washington initiative. That rush of the journalistic lemmings includes not only the heavyweights of the media, but many cartoonists and, as well, humorists like Art Buchwald and Russell Baker, whose satire is often striking and effective. Prominent among the lemmings are television personalities like Jon Snow of Britain's ITV, who recently presented one film "report" that continually cut from vaguely delineated political and military developments to heart-rending scenes in a refugee camp. In that and a drum beat of subsequent "reports" the conclusion was not implied but hammered home time and again: US policy was, presumably by direct intention, rendering tens of thousands homeless and killing hundreds of women and children. El Salvador, the viewer could not but conclude, was a deliberate replication of Viet Nam. And "Viet Nam" has become synonymous with absolute evil—practised, of course, by the United States.

¹⁴ As Richard West has recently written (*Spectator*, 11 May, p. 11):

"To those who describe El Salvador as 'America's new Vietnam', I recommend visiting Vietnam as I did last year. The war goes on as hard as ever—this time against the neighbouring Communist Chinese and Cambodians. The Americans have gone, only to be replaced by hundreds of Russian advisers. The streets of Saigon are loud with old American rock music. The Yankees are loved and missed."

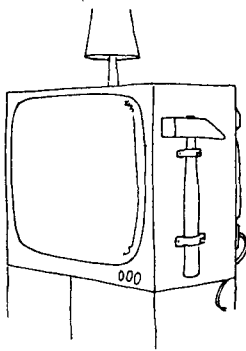
THE "VIET NAM SYNDROME" is compounded of a variety of symptoms, none unique in itself, but unprecedented in combination and devastating in their totality. Wars have been badly reported in the past. Facts have been mis-stated, and their interpretation has been biased. Emotions have been deliberately inflamed, and reporters have ridden to fame on waves of misrepresentation. But never before Viet Nam had the collective policy of the media—no less stringent term will serve—sought by graphic and unremitting distortion the victory of the enemies of the correspondents' own side. Television coverage was, of course, new in its intensity and repetitiveness; it was crucial in shifting the emphasis from fact to emotion. And television will play the same role in future conflicts—on the Western side, of course. It will not and cannot expose the crimes of an enemy who is too shrewd

to allow the cameras free play.

As long as the "Viet Nam Syndrome" afflicts the media, it seems to me that it will be virtually impossible for the West to conduct an effective foreign policy. It is apparently irrelevant that the expectations of paradise after Hanoi's victory evoked by "the critics of the American war" became the purgatory the Indo-Chinese people have suffered. Just as many denizens of the ante-bellum American South did not know that "Damyantee" was really two words, an entire generation in Europe and the United States behaves as if "the dirty, immoral war in Viet Nam" were an irrefutable and inseparable dogma. Merely equate El Salvador (or any other American intervention) to Viet Nam—and not only the American public, but all "liberal" Europeans will condemn it without reservation. That is all they need to know. In its

Covering "the Scoop", or Hotting-Up a Hot Story

San Salvador



THE DISTURBING EFFECTS of the press coverage of El Salvador's turmoil can be blamed, in my view, upon foreign journalists in general and upon America's big three TV networks—CBS, NBC and ABC—in particular. The Reagan administration's decision to back El Salvador's ruling junta—and to send military advisers—triggered a TV war in America in which rival viewing

ratings soon became as important as the admittedly complex issues. Coverage of what viewers are assured by their President is a hot war against Communism in America's backyard requires "bang bang" footage—fighting, or at least lots of troops and weapons.

It is no criticism of the American TV crews working in El Salvador, many of whom I know and respect (they keep filming when the bullets fly and sensible newspapermen get their heads down), to observe that they can get mightily excited by a truck-load of soldiers even if they are only driving back to barracks. It was quite common last month to encounter half-a-dozen hired mini-buses full of cameramen pursuing a solitary armoured car along a manifestly peaceful road.

The trouble arises when this sort of footage is used to convey a misleading impression. The truth is that, except for the guerrillas' abortive "final offensive" in January (during which two foreign journalists were killed), there has been no serious or sustained fighting between the armed forces and the insurgents. The

real pattern is of small patrols and ambushes, of hit-and-run attacks and mines.

A WEEK-LONG government "offensive", using planes, helicopters and new armoured vehicles, in the Suchitoto district early in March produced only a handful of battle casualties on either side. The guerrillas do not want a set-piece confrontation yet, and the army is not yet able to force one upon them. But, because the operation provided an opportunity for courageous TV crews to follow army units through the countryside, filming them using mortars and blazing away at the undergrowth in what used to be known in Vietnam as "reconnaissance by fire", it was made to measure for the network programmers back in the US.

So the pressure for more and better "bang bang" originates in head office: but the effects are felt in El Salvador. On two occasions I know of, the presence of a large group of foreign journalists (including newspaper and magazine reporters) created an incident. In a village near Chalatalengo, where there had been no fighting for several weeks, the arrival of the press was greeted with a couple of bursts of machine gun fire from guerrillas in the hills nearby, evidently designed to demonstrate that they were still in business. Nobody was hurt—but only by good luck.

The same goes for a brief gun battle in the capital, San Salvador, during a display for the foreign press of arms captured by government forces. The weapons were being fired for the cameras. A guerrilla unit concealed in the slums believed another guerrilla group must be under attack, so they fired on an army patrol to divert the pressure. . . .

Philip Jacobson

SUNDAY TIMES (London)

final effect—what has over the last decade been called “the paralysis of political will”—it will make it especially difficult for the US to honour any political commitment anywhere in the world where small and threatened nations may expect American support for their independent existence. Before they fall to an aggressor, they will have been victimised by “the Viet Nam Syndrome.”

IT HAS LONG appeared to me that the medical and legal professions enjoy one enormous advantage. If

they err, doctors and lawyers may be blamed. Yet, except in the most flagrant cases, the client or the patient pays them again for correcting their mistakes—if they can, and if he can. But the media on Viet Nam, it has become blatantly obvious, have enjoyed even greater advantages. Even in the most flagrant cases, they have not been blamed. They have, rather, been acclaimed for their errors. Who can, ultimately, prove it otherwise? The peoples of the non-Communist world have paid dearly for these errors—and may well continue to pay.

Never Worn

In the window of the Post Office and General Store
At Harehills, off the Roundhay Road, Leeds 8,
Paraded handwritten advertisements by the score:
Ford Consul, long MOT; Vauxhall Estate,
Good Runner; Furnished Room for Gent;
Chest of Drawers and Wardrobe; Antique Paperweight;
Boy's Blazer; Camping Equipment and Tent.

Each spoke in some way of loss and hope
Of a little gain. Between *Kitten,*
Good Home Needed and *Have Your Horoscope*
Supplied by Expert Astrologer was written,
In rather childish formed characters, this:
Wedding-dress, Beautiful Material and Pattern,
Never Been Worn, £10, Too Good to Miss.

Could those small stains on that card be tears,
Faint spoor of grief? Perhaps too fanciful
A notion and yet, already, sly fears
Are awakened that this is not improbable.
Never Been Worn: What cruel intervention
Of fear, dereliction or death was able
To frustrate the original white intention?

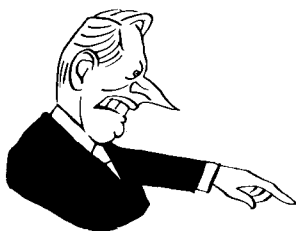
Conclusive yet not, a spectral tale:
The dress will hover, pale moth, and gleam
In fancy's crepuscular cupboard, frail
As a lover's promise, then float through dream
Beneath chiming skies on a velvety lawn,
Pursued by reasonable offers that stream
Hopelessly after the too good to miss, the never worn.

Vernon Scannell

DISCUSSION

What's Right with the Brandt Report

A Reply to ENCOUNTER Critics—By EDWARD HEATH



THE BRANDT Report's most vehement critics are striking for two things which most of them have in common. First, they have clearly not read it properly, or even

at all. In tones of offended indignation, they list numerous failures of omission or commission which tend to be as unsubstantiated as they are vehement. Second, they almost never offer the world an alternative vision which begins to address the large range of novel and difficult problems confronting the international economy today.

The collection of articles in recent issues of *ENCOUNTER*, under the rubric "What's Wrong with the Brandt Report?", was no exception. They provide a handy catalogue of some of the falsehoods and misrepresentations which are being so liberally bandied about by its critics.

First of all, there is the familiar accusation that the Brandt Report calls for the creation of a "global welfare State", to use Kenneth Minogue's words. But anyone who has even skimmed through the Report will detect that if it has one central and unmistakable thesis, it is that the economic development of the South is crucial to the revival of growth in the North. This means that policies are needed to generate jobs in the South, to develop its agricultural base, to increase trade with the North, to develop energy reserves wherever it is economical to do so, to reduce fluctuations in the price of essential commodities; and so on. In all these areas there are highly specific and deeply rooted mutual interests between North and South which the Report spells out in considerable detail. Is this a typical prescription for a global welfare system?

The Report goes on to emphasise the great importance for governments in developing countries to allocate finance and other resources for development in ways which are both more equitable and more efficient. Indeed, a whole

chapter, entitled "The Task of the South", is devoted to this subject. *Inter alia*, it stresses that

"in any assault on international poverty, social and economic reforms within developing countries must complement the critical role to be played by the international environment for development."

That should scotch another popular myth about the Report, namely that it pins all the responsibility for world development on the North, while absolving the South of every duty, save cashing aid cheques.

The next mistruth, which runs through all the articles, is that the Brandt Report neglects or underrates private enterprise in its recommendations for global economic recovery. Yet the Report consistently acknowledges the key importance of private enterprise. In Chapter 8, on "The Task of the South", it laments the fact that "in many [developing] countries official policies have tended to neglect, or even to discriminate against this sector. . . ." And it goes on to recommend that "in order to utilise the potential of the informal (i.e. the private) sector in assisting development, there is need to assist it through easier access to credit, training to upgrade skills, technical advice on product improvement, and the provision of better tools and infrastructural facilities."

THE VITAL ROLE of the commercial banks in channelling finance to the developing countries is also recognised by the Report. But it points to the danger—which increasing numbers of practical bankers are now voicing in public—that the commercial banking system is becoming seriously overstretched in its lending to the Third World.

After the 1973–74 oil crisis, developing countries borrowed increasingly large sums of money from the commercial banks to finance their development. Some of them accumulated huge quantities of debt, but they were always able to pay the interest on it and to continue borrowing, even if they never got

back into the black. Now, however, after a rise in the price of oil of 140% in 1979–80, massive increases in the cost of their imports from the North, soaring interest rates, and declining prices for some of their main commodities, many developing countries are finding it almost impossible even to pay the interest on their debt. Some countries, notably Brazil, are spending virtually all their export earnings on oil imports and the interest on their debt. The risks of further lending are becoming simply unacceptable for the commercial banks.

Yet without additional assistance the alternatives facing many of these countries will be stark. Either they will have to cut growth drastically, which would do further damage to world economic activity and could trigger major social unrest in what are often strategically vital countries for the West; or they may be forced to default on their existing commercial loans. The result of that could be to trigger a collapse of confidence on the part of the commercial banking system, which in turn could lead to further bankruptcies by other debtor countries, and a global financial crisis of alarming proportions. None of these developments could conceivably be in the interests of the North.

The inescapable conclusion is, therefore, that the international financial institutions (notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) need to play a very much greater role in channeling funds to those developing countries where they are most urgently needed and can most productively be used. This is necessary precisely in order to safeguard the private banking system which has served the world so well and which will need to play at least as important a role in the future. What an irony it therefore is that the simplistic ideologues are driven to oppose the very policies which are needed to safeguard and enhance the role of private enterprise in international finance!

BUT PERHAPS IDEOLOGY is, in this case, the most convenient refuge for those who cannot face up to the need for change. One of the most common criticisms of the Brandt Report is that it has failed to acknowledge the enormous achievements of the *old* international economic order. To which one replies that not only has the Old Order been breaking down for well over a decade, but even if it could be given artificial respiration it would not suffice to cope with the new set of problems which confronts the world economy today. The world is now faced simultaneously with high inflation, high unemployment, high interest rates, low economic growth, and a continuous and unpredictable rise in the price of oil. A combination of *all five* of these factors is unprecedented in economic history. It is a radically new situation, which demands a radical set of policies.

The problem of oil provides an unequalled example of the need for a new approach. Oil is not a normal market commodity. For one thing, it is concentrated within the borders of a few states, which are sufficiently well organised to dominate the world market. Second, these states are sufficiently prone to internal upheaval or to conflict with other states to make their production policies unreliable at best. Third, the biggest oil producers have a very great incentive, for both economic and political reasons, substantially to reduce production. And fourth, the alternatives to oil are so expensive and time-consuming to produce that the world is unlikely to escape from the OPEC spell for at least another two decades.

Yet there are many people, like Professor Elie Kedourie in his *ENCOUNTER* article, who still fail to understand these realities. "There is absolutely no shortage of oil", he proclaims; "in a free market this commodity would not fetch a tenth of its current price. . . ." But the market for oil is *not* a free market! Surely the events of the last two years have proved that reality beyond any doubt. A temporary shortage in oil deliveries to the West after the revolution in Iran led to a price rise of nearly 150%. Since then, demand has dropped, according to classical market behaviour. But has the price dropped to the extent that it would have done in a free market? Of course it has not; and what is more, all the OPEC countries have to do is to reduce their production of oil by just enough to keep the price at least constant.

One is reminded by Professor Kedourie's touching optimism of Milton Friedman's solemn prediction after the 1973–74 hike in oil prices that OPEC would be no more than a temporary phenomenon. Indeed, he went so far as to predict that it could not survive at prices above ten dollars a barrel. Today we are at well over thirty dollars a barrel—and this situation will continue for at least a decade, and probably two. That is why the Brandt Commission looked at a 20-year time-span, a foresightedness which Professor Kedourie seems to find preposterous as a matter of principle.

LEST WE BECOME too demoralised, by the refusal of so many to recognise the new realities of our era, by their ferocious opposition to change or simply by their blindness to the need for it, we can perhaps draw some comfort from the experience of history. Throughout the centuries, almost every progressive idea has had to confront savage opposition, from the electric light bulb to the steam engine, from the first piece of labour legislation to the abolition of slavery. Yet once the vision is accepted, it is the rationalisers of the received wisdom who are its most meticulous and earnest sponsors. We shall have to live with this reality in the future, as we have had to do in the past.

LETTERS

German Gloom

JOHANNES GROSS' article in your April issue may well reflect the truth about the Federal Republic of Germany; but, if it does, it is disturbing.

Apparently the Western Germans are, on the whole, bored with their society, which is nevertheless, in most respects, the wonder and the envy of the world. At some stage, it seems, they will have to concentrate on the real issue facing them, which is no longer incorporation in what might still be called the Free World, but rather the reunification of the German Nation.

However justifiable, the re-establishment of a new German *Reich* of some eighty million people will, as in the past, probably not be welcomed by the East or by the West. Its pursuit, if seriously attempted, can therefore only end in a frustration considerably greater than that from which, according to Johannes Gross, the Federal German Republic is at present suffering!

GLADWYN

*House of Lords
Westminster.*

"Peace" or War?

MICHAEL HOWARD writes (ENCOUNTER, April) that one cannot equate such statements as *Pravda's* "the struggle will continue . . . until the complete and final victory of Communism on a world scale" with the notion of Soviet world conquest.

No doubt the word "equate" is not quite the right one. All the same, if one considers what *Pravda*, or any Soviet spokesman, means by the world-wide victory of Communism, the distinction is not great. For it is clear that Moscow only regards as legitimate such Communist régimes as follow the Soviet line and not, for example, Dubcekite or Maoist variants; and that the only way forward is through a Socialist Commonwealth in which the Brezhnev Doctrine—which is to say the right of Soviet military intervention to secure orthodoxy—is the prevailing principle. In what way is the assumption that a Communist world can only be achieved thus different in substance from a programme of Soviet world conquest?

It is true that this would be hard to effect, and liable to continual schism and rebellion. And here, surely, is the answer (or part of the answer) to the Unilateralist arguments which have been so ably presented in your correspondence columns. All intelligent Unilateralism (that is, without delusions about the benignity of the Kremlin) is ultimately based on the idea that surrender is better than nuclear warfare: "*Better Red than Dead*." The trouble is that a Communist world would be a war-like one, and its rulers would not be inhibited against nuclear weapons by public or other pressures.

Djilas was told in 1944 by a Soviet Army Commander that "when Communism triumphed in the whole world, wars would then take on a final bitterness. . . ." This idea was strange to Djilas at the time, but he came to agree that "various sects would undertake the reckless destruc-

tion of the human race for the sake of its greater 'happiness'."

The first intra-Communist war, projected against Tito by Rakosi and Stalin, only reached the planning stage. 1956 saw the troops of two Communist-led governments in bitter fighting. Since then we have had the fighting on the Ussuri, the Viet Nam-Cambodia War, the Sino-Vietnamese War, the armed invasion (even though, in the event, unopposed) of Czechoslovakia. Moreover, it is reasonably clear that, but for the existence of the outside world, the USSR would have undertaken a nuclear pre-emptive attack on China in the early 1970s. On the other hand, it was Mao and his spokesmen who frequently asserted that nuclear war, even if involving the destruction of entire nations (the Italians and Czechs were specified) and the death of half the human race, should *not* be avoided if in the process "true Communism" triumphed.

There are other arguments for attempting to preserve both peace and liberty; but at least it is clear that surrender may lose us both.

ROBERT CONQUEST

*Hoover Institution
Stanford, California*

Shakespeare in India

DEREK BREWER's biblical admonition ["The Battleground of Home", ENCOUNTER, April 1980] to be as little babes in approaching fairy tales and Shakespeare's "romance" comedies is a point well made. What he has to say about the proper approach to the staging of *Twelfth Night* brought to my mind an argument I once had defending the felicitous naiveté of a Marathi presentation of it to a self-conscious teacher of English literature.

He makes some useful points about the difference between a traditional narrative (whether fairy tale, folk tale, romance, or non-naturalistic theatre) and a naturalistic narrative (whether neo-classical theatre or the modern novel). But the discussion would be more illuminating if one were to bring in the folkloristic taxonomy of narratives; namely, factive realistic (history); factive unrealistic (myth); fictive realistic (Brewer's naturalistic narrative); and fictive unrealistic (fairy tales, romances). Shakespeare not only spans this classification. His *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night* are actually transitional between the last two categories, and should not be wholly lumped with fairy tale and romance.

ASHOK R. KELKAR

*Deccan College
Poona, India*

Lord Chalfont's Alliance

I READ Lord Chalfont's article (ENCOUNTER, January) with great interest. I accept NATO deterrent theory, but the article failed to convince me.

It seems to me relatively unimportant whether Britain has nuclear weapons or not. They add little to the NATO deterrent. They are dwarfed by American forces. Certainly Britain ought to give US missiles British bases.

But Lord Chalfont refers to the "psychological importance" to the Alliance of a second non-American nuclear force. He does not spell out what this importance is. Indeed, later, he says that the European members of NATO base their defence policies on "the ultimate guarantee of American nuclear power."

He contradicts himself. At first he appears to suggest that the non-nuclear members of NATO are less secure than Britain, but more secure than they would be without a British deterrent: three tiers of security. Apparently British nuclear forces can be removed from NATO control in a national emergency. Note that the emergency has to be "national." The Germans, the Italians, and the Dutch

gain nothing from our potentially separate national deterrent until we decide that the crisis is so threatening to us that we have to withdraw our forces for our own use. None of these states has tried to develop its own deterrent. They do not perceive any threat of an American nuclear withdrawal. They feel no less secure than we do though we have the deterrent and they do not.

In practice, the British deterrent makes little difference. I agree with Lord Chalfont that we would be no safer if we renounced it. Lord Chalfont dismisses the argument that it might set a good example to the rest of the world. The chief danger at present comes from lateral proliferation in the Third World. Britain is in the position at the moment where it can renounce nuclear weapons without any loss. If any nation can do so, Britain can now. This must be worth thinking about.

It is often argued that the British deterrent presents the USSR with two nuclear decision-making centres in NATO. It "keeps the Russians guessing." Lord Chalfont accepts one of the premises of this argument. He talks about "creating uncertainty in the mind of a potential aggressor." Without quibbling over words, surely our aim must be to create *certainly* in the mind of an aggressor—certainty of an effective response. In nuclear relations, each side must know where it stands. The British deterrent, if genuinely independent, in fact adds to international insecurity. Clear channels of communication between East and West demand single chains of command. One aspect of this is that we ought to retain nuclear weapons for exclusively military purposes. Lord Chalfont is keen on "psychological importance." He sees no military value in Cruise missiles but he wants them because they "symbolise to the Americans the commitment of Western Europe to the alliance." In the same way, Britain's nuclear forces, though having no military value, cannot be renounced without creating suspicion about Britain's political commitment to NATO. This is shadow-boxing.

The USA and the USSR each has sufficient missiles to destroy each other's major cities many times over. Once is surely enough? It is hard to see what defensive—or offensive—purpose is furthered on either side by any more missiles than it needs to guarantee destruction of those cities. They will no doubt wish to maintain parity with each other's technical advances. New types of missile will constantly emerge. But within each successive category, a relatively small number of missiles will offer that guarantee. Moreover, since both sides have submarines, they do not need to worry about the safety of their missiles before they are used.

LORD CHALFONT CLAIMS that NATO is an alliance "which is prepared to use nuclear weapons to defeat a conventional attack." These may only be tactical weapons—but, as he says, "the Russians cannot be guaranteed to abide by the rules of escalation formulated by the West. . . ." Many people who accept the deterrent principle will find this willingness to use nuclear weapons against conventional attack unacceptable—even wicked. We are under an imperative duty to find other means. An interesting article by George Quester in the September 1978 issue of *ENCOUNTER* indicated that the balance of military power has swung in favour of defence. This gives us some grounds for hope that Russian tanks can be halted in Europe without the destruction of 20th-century civilisation.

—Book-Lover, Come Back to Me—

Monte Carlo



PEOPLE WHO love books should stay put and surround themselves with large libraries. I wish I had taken my own advice a long time ago, instead of leaving England for one foreign spot after another, trailing folios behind

me as in a giant paperchase.

The library I now have about me as I write is big but deficient. It contains too many unsold review copies (try selling a review copy of "The Joys of Yiddish" in Monte Carlo). I woke one morning last month raging at the absence of certain works I love—love so much that I had lent and so lost them—and, in advancing age, wished to reread and reread again. How to get hold of them? There are no bookshops on the Continent where I am likely to find a second-hand "Diary of a Nobody" or "Cold Comfort Farm".

THERE IS A Norman noble in Shaw's "Saint Joan" who says:

"There is nothing on earth more exquisite than a bonny book, with well-placed columns of rich black writing in beautiful borders, and illuminated pictures cunningly inset. But nowadays, instead of looking at books, people read them."

I think we have all been puritanised into seeing books as vehicles of earnest enlightenment and forgetting that they can be lovely things to handle. It is as if BOOK were an acronym for Box Of Organised Knowledge. We have become paperback-buyers and put up with torn spines and covers on which telephone numbers have been ballpointed. We have to relearn pride in books as objects lovely in themselves. But, unlike Shaw's Norman noble, we must see beauty as an adjunct to the act of reading.

Anthony Burgess

OBSERVER MAGAZINE

Nuclear technology will not go away. It looks like being a permanent fixture for the rest of human history. And it contains a permanent threat. No superpower will willingly give up its missiles so long as they serve a purpose. The answer is to make sure that they do not serve a purpose. In other words, the answer is unbeatable anti-missile technology. We have recently heard little about it, but it offers both sides the perfect deterrent. In a sense it suggests the only long-term hope. The USA and the USSR ought to contribute some of their best scientists to a joint international research committee to investigate anti-missile technology and make its findings simultaneously available to anyone who wants them. Neither side has anything to lose. Even if America surrenders all her anti-missile secrets and gets nothing in return, she merely places the USSR in the same position as herself—a triumph of deterrent theory which requires nothing more than parity.

ROBERT SILVER

London

Rushing to Support

IN MY READING, this came to my term. The ENCOUNTER magazine let me read it, an interested things. And when I got it, is concerning me. Detect. "I am Mr Peaceful Quarcoo, International Ornithologist." Is what about? Is Mr Constantine FitzGibbon have is to written (or saying), in the magazine dated November 1980. That is, "Sidney Hook's Trumpet", wrote by Mr Constantine FitzGibbon; quoting. His view and intentions. When I am read it, in our own ENCOUNTER magazine, it explaining about it.

"It is rare to detect an error in such a writer, even more so a commonplace misquotation. In a letter, Lord Acton wrote; 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' It appears here in its usual misquoted form, namely that power as such always corrupts. I should not engage in such nitpicking did Sidney Hook not make it abundantly plain that as a social democrat, he wishes to endow the people with as much power as possible."

I write short to know it, here. "I will let everybody to knowing, I am full democrat-system." I am Mr Peaceful Quarcoo. According to my duties, it spreading all over into a various nations! In the world. "I will informing, from the beginning of the school!" I beginning from the Western nation. There Mr Peaceful Quarcoo, come a top line and everybody have seen it. So good I am! I will satisfying the mankind, to know I learned from Western nation! Going! on they know, Mr Peaceful Quarcoo have got intelligent. Mostly to helping to solving, our nations problems! This let the nations got interested, of myself! Mr Peaceful Quarcoo! But also Eastern nations are there! "I cannot love one and kick one away!" But I love all because of the "Human Rights." This let me stand a neutral person in the world. "If really I misquote", what about ENCOUNTER must to do? So that, it come to the right path for us. I am only one person, who wrote all, no secretary to write. But I will try hard, of it! Well what? I have wrote you, it will clear for us. Nothing more to say. I will hear from here. Soon or later. Thanks.

PEACEFUL QUARCOO

Accra
Ghana

"Stop That Quote!"

UNDER "Stop That Quote!" in your February/March issue you reproduce Peter Simple's suggestion that fines and imprisonment be inflicted on anybody who quotes from *The Second Coming*. Well, yes, but the prohibition should apply doubly to those who quote from the poem inaccurately, as you did. The line does not read "*The best lack of conviction...*" but "*The best lack all conviction...*"

"Stop That Misquote!" would be more like it.

As for M. J. Lasky's "Perception of Words", there is no such thing as the "collected wisecracks of W. C. Fields." There aren't any W. C. Field witticisms. His humour was all character, not verbal. The wisecrack most often attributed to him—"A man who hates dogs and children can't be all bad"—was not his at all, but Leo Rosten's.

RICHARD HANSER

Mamaroneck
New York

Abandoning the Party?

NOT UNTIL the end of his article (ENCOUNTER, April) does Stephen Haseler mention the essential plank in the Social Democratic platform, to "save Britain from its impending defection from the Western family of nations." The "Western family" he refers to is, of course, the Common Market. It was the overwhelming decision of the Labour Party Conference that Britain must leave the Common Market which at last drove the Gang of Three (plus Roy Jenkins) to the desperate expedient of actually trying to destroy the Labour Party. How can they bear to look Labour voters in the face after deliberately abandoning the party to the loathsome Left?

JOHN GILLARD WATSON

Oxford

Andrei Sakharov

WE WOULD LIKE to bring to the attention of your readers that today [21 May] is the birthday of a great man. Andrei Sakharov is not only an outstanding scientist esteemed internationally by his peers, but one of those human beings whose shining moral courage redeems some of the political squalor of our times.

On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday we honour him for his great gifts and for his high courage. We associate ourselves with the international initiatives (based on the UN Declaration on Human Rights and the Helsinki agreements) which aim to secure from the Soviet Government his release from exile, the re-establishment of his status as a scientist and citizen, and his return to life in Moscow.

VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY
ALAN BULLOCK
(Lord Bullock)
ALUN CHALFONT
(Lord Chalfont)
HUGH TREVOR-ROPER
(Lord Dacre)
Sir NEVILL MOTT, F.R.S.
ARTHUR KOESTLER
LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI

Sir PETER MEDAWAR
M. F. PERUTZ
PETER REDDAWAY
LEONARD SCHAPIRO
HUGH SETON-WATSON
Sir BRIAN PIPPARD
DICK TAVERNE
JOHN VAIZEY
(Lord Vaizey)
J. M. ZIMAN

AUTHORS

Shena Mackay's novels include *Toddler on the Run* and *Music Upstairs* (Deutsch, 1964, 1965), and *Old Crow* and *Advent Calendar* (Cape, 1967, 1971).

Penelope Shuttle's latest book is *The Orchard Upstairs* (Oxford University Press, 1980).

Carol Rumens's most recent volume of poems is *Unplayed Music* (Secker and Warburg, 1981).

Michael Charlton is one of Britain's leading broadcasters and a veteran foreign correspondent for the BBC. He and his Radio 3 producer, Anthony Moncrieff, are the co-authors of *Many Reasons Why*, a documentary inquiry into the Viet Nam War (Scholar Press, 1978). His investigative documentary in this issue is based on the texts broadcast earlier this year in the Charlton/Moncrieff series entitled *The Price of Victory*. The BBC hopes to publish the complete series in book form in 1982.

Since the death of Goronwy Rees (R), our regular monthly "Column" has been discontinued. We are delighted to inaugurate a new series, written by M, a distinguished author and frequent ENCOUNTER contributor.

Eugenio Montale (b. Genoa 1896), won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1975. His volumes of poetry include *Ossi di seppia* (1925), *Le occasioni* (1939), *Satura* (1971), and *Quaderno di quattro anni* (1978), published by Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milan.

N. S. Thompson is Curator at the Casa Guidi in Florence. His essays, poems and translations have appeared in *Akros*, *Contemporary Review*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Poetry Review*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Alistair Elliot's edition of Dryden's version of Virgil's *Georgics* was published last year by MidNag.

Michael Hulse has recently published his first full collection of poetry, *Knowing and Forgetting* (Secker & Warburg). In 1978 he won the Poetry Society's National Poetry Competition, and in 1980 was given a major Eric Gregory Award.

Jean-François Revel's translated works include *The Totalitarian Temptation* (n.e. Penguin, 1978) and *Without Marx or Jesus* (n.e. Paladin, 1972).

François Bondy is an editor of the monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte* and of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich).

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London.

Dame Helen Gardner is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford. Among her publications are *The Art of T. S. Eliot* (Faber, 1949), *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Oxford University Press, 1965), *Religion and Literature* (Faber, 1971), and *The Composition of Four Quartets* (Faber, 1978). She has also edited *The Divine Poems of John Donne* (second edition, Oxford University Press, 1978), *The Metaphysical Poets* (Penguin, 1957), and *The New Oxford Book of English Verse* (Oxford University Press, 1978). Her latest book, *In Defence of the Imagination*, will be published by OUP in the autumn.

Esmond Wright is Director of the Institute of United States Studies and Professor of American History at London University. Among his publications are *Fabric of Freedom 1763-1800* (2nd ed., Macmillan, 1979).

Penelope Lively won the first National Book Award with her novel *Treasures of Time* (1979). Her most recent novel, *Judgement Day*, was published last year by Heinemann.

The Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, Member of Parliament for Bexley, was Prime Minister in the Conservative Government from 1970-74, and Leader of the Opposition from 1974-75. He is a member of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt, which issued its report under the title *North-South: A Programme for Survival* (Pan, 1979).

Robert Elegant was a foreign correspondent in Asia from 1951-76, and spent extensive periods in Viet Nam covering the war for *Newsweek* and for the *Los Angeles Times/Washington Post News Service*. He received three Overseas Press Club Awards (1967, 1969, and 1972) for his interpretation of foreign affairs. His books range from studies of China—*The Centre of the World* (Methuen, 1963) and *Mao's Great Revolution* (Weidenfeld, 1971)—two best-selling novels—*Dynasty* (Collins, 1977) and *Manchu* (Allen Lane, 1980).

Vernon Scannell's *New and Collected Poems* was published last year by Robson Books.

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Life & Letters Today

Westminster

SECRET WEAPON: *One of the great glories of Denis Healey in this age when politicians converse in MacDonald's fast food prose is that he drives us back to the dictionary [writes Edward Pearce].*

Sir Ian Gilmour had been having rather a good afternoon in the House of Commons before Mr Healey, in whose soul a rookery footpad and an Oxford tutor contend, hit him over the head with six inches of piping marked "Velleity."

Sir Ian had repudiated the suggestion that he had a passion for closer integration with the EEC. With that delicate diffidence which the best members of our ruling class have elevated to an art form, he observed that "passion is a strong word so far as I am concerned."

Up sprang the erudite ruffian and agreed. He should of course have described the Honourable Gentleman's pallid languor in this cause rather as velleity.

Velleity, n. low degree of volition not prompting to action.—**CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY.**

Members of Parliament whose vocabularies are eroded to an arid Karst of committee prose of the "viable and meaningful factors affecting the community as a whole" sort, winced with an untutored knowledge that somehow blood had been drawn with Mr Healey's secret if obsolescent weapon, the English language. Having the Demon Denis back in action is a real pleasure.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Peking

HOTTING THINGS UP: The purge in China proceeds apace, and nowhere more severely than against former members of the police who have been charged with foul, bloody, and quite illegal deeds during the reign of the Gang of Four. Secret-police chief Kang Cheng and Police-Minister Xie Fuzhi were recently summarily expelled from the Communist Party. This strange act of ritualistic ideological purification would appear to have "other-worldly" implications—for the police chief died five years ago, and the minister some eight years ago! Marxism here seems to be turning to some kind of "metaphysical revisionism." Or is it merely that the aforementioned devils are already in hell, and why not turn up the thermostat a little bit?

DIE WELTWOCH

London

COUNTER PLOTS: If the proposal to move to one area all the graves of notable people buried in Highgate Cemetery is taken up, may I further suggest that, as a tribute to the Mixed Economy, the remains of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) be moved from across the aisle, where they are now, to rest side-by-side with those of Karl Marx?

THE TIMES

London

"SHERPAS": The big meetings of the summer were those of the heads of government in Ottawa of the Big Seven—the US, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, Italy and Canada—and the Finance Ministers of the Five in London; and they had to insist on great secrecy as that was the only thing on which they agreed.

The "sherpas" prepare the Ottawa agenda and communiqué. They are given that name because they work on the foothills of the summit—and give the world leaders some words to say, whether anything has been agreed or not.

FINANCIAL TIMES

London

ALLITERATION: The affair had begun when foreign burglars shot several policemen after attempting to bore into a jeweller's shop in Houndsditch. Most of the minor characters involved were eventually rounded up—and released. But "Peter the Painter", the mysterious figure whose name reverberated across the world, was never traced. James Agate, the theatre critic, always maintained that Peter owed his fame to alliteration's artful aid. "If he had been known as Albert the Greengrocer, he would never have caught the imagination of the public."

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

East Berlin

THEOLOGY: East Berlin, an empty and sad place a decade ago, now seems more cheerful and bustles with activity. The palatial Metropol Hotel has been erected for visiting foreigners, but East Germans with foreign currency to spend also patronize the bars and restaurants [Dan Morgan writes].

Where religion is concerned, it is evident that the vision of Bertolt Brecht still takes precedence over that of Martin Luther. At a Palm Sunday service in an old community church in the borough of Pankow, the handful of worshipers looked through the stained glass windows at red flags rippling in the wind from an adjacent building.

WASHINGTON POST

Munich

FREUDIAN SLIP: We regret the mistake in our record of announcements of forthcoming cultural events last week which contained a typographical error. Next Monday the National Theatre in Munich will be putting on a performance of "Salome" (the opera by Richard Strauss) and not "Lou Salome" (the psychoanalyst and friend of Sigmund Freud).

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

Wolverhampton

DWARFED: Inflation and spending cuts have forced the rewriting of a fairy tale. Because of cash restrictions imposed by Wolverhampton Council, the Open Air Theatre Company has lost some members and will stage "Snow White and the Two Dwarfs."

DAILY TELEGRAPH



A premier publisher in the United States
with a sense of humour

Even on serious subjects, some of our authors have been known to write with wit. For instance, **George J. Stigler** and **Herbert Stein**, both economists, come to mind. **Howard Nemerov**, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, has been called by James Dickey, "the best poet of both wit and seriousness we have now." And some of our authors write about wit—feliculously, of course. Here are a few of our publications which amuse as well as enlighten.

THE SNOUTERS *Form and Life of the Rhinogrades*
by **Harald Stumpke** (Gerolf Steiner)

MATHEMATICS AND HUMOR by **John Allen Paulos**

COMIC FAITH *The Great Tradition from Austen to Joyce*
by **Robert M. Polhemus**

THE COMIC MIND *Comedy and the Movies* by **Gerald Mast**

SWIFT AND THE SATIRIST'S ART by **Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr.**

THE AMIABLE HUMORIST by **Stuart M. Tave**

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